

Guest  
Rooms  
Enjoyed  
and  
Endured

"  
Robinson

# Guest Rooms

Enjoyed and  
Endured in the  
King's Service

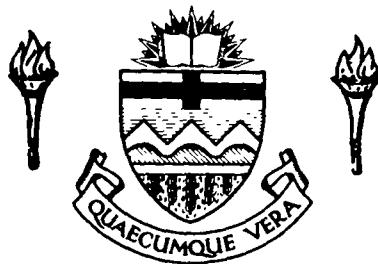
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By F. A. Robinson

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To J. & Friends  
Mr & Mrs J. D. Johnson  
With many happy  
remembrances.

H. B. Miner.

September 29<sup>th</sup> 1935.



# Guest Rooms

ENJOYED  
AND  
ENDURED

IN THE KING'S SERVICE

BY F. A. ROBINSON, M.A.



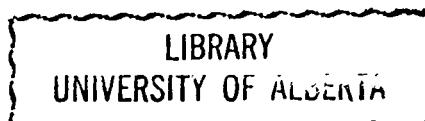
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Toronto, Canada

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*An Introductory Word by*  
REV. G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D.D.  
*Westminster Chapel, London, England.*

To greet with welcome a book one has not yet read may seem a questionable proceeding; nevertheless I do it gladly because I know the writer and have heard, in happy hours with him, some of these stories. I have also enjoyed and endured with him some abiding places on the pilgrimage of service. That the stories told will be characterized by spiritual significance, sanctified humour and stirring pathos, goes without saying. I commend the book to all lovers of the Lord, believing it will fulfil a ministry of light and love.

November, 1933.

2639756

**To My Daughters  
HELENA AND GRACE**  
WHOSE OCCUPANCY OF THE PARENTAL GUEST ROOM  
HAS ALWAYS FILLED THE HOME WITH GLADNESS,  
AND TO  
UNNUMBERED KINDLY HOSTS AND HOSTESSES THROUGHOUT  
THE DOMINION OF CANADA, ACROSS WHICH THE  
WRITER HAS JOURNEYED MANY TIMES  
IN THE KING'S SERVICE.

## *Foreword . . .*

In early childhood days one of those to whom this book is dedicated, frequently asked whether the bedtime story was a "really really story". Its value to the child's mind was evidently enhanced or discounted according to the reply.

For the sake of the living, and to save some kindly hosts and hostesses much embarrassment, and possibly also for the personal safety of the author, some of these guest room stories are removed from their original setting. Necessarily some are composite word-pictures.

With these exceptions, the narratives are "really really stories".

Appreciative acknowledgment is made of material furnished through conversation, address or letter by Rev. W. H. Black, B.A., Tuxford, Sask.; Rev. J. A. Felstead, Depot Harbour, Ont.; Rev. G. Ernest Forbes, B.A., Weston, Ont.; Rev. Leslie Garrett, Trout Lake, Ont.; Rev. F. C. Overend, B.A., Hamilton, Ont.; Mrs. Simon Johnston, Kamsack, Sask., and Miss H. Estelle Scott, Perth, Ont. The material referred to has been embodied in chapters 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 13, 16 and 22.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. D. Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "H. D." at the top, a middle initial, and "Robinson" written below in a larger, more formal script.

# CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	At the End of the Steel	7
II.	Joseph's Fall from Grace	15
III.	Sharing the Bed with Danny	24
IV.	Old Billy of Paradise Plains	30
V.	A Night on a Prairie Reserve	45
VI.	The Privilege of Sharing Privation	56
VII.	Hospitality Among the Cree Indians	64
VIII.	The Ghost of Alec Rollins	74
IX.	The Room that was Poor John's	82
X.	Among the Nova Scotian Hills	89
XI.	The Patricks' Guest Room	102
XII.	A Night with the Outcasts of a Great City	107
XIII.	The Tepees of the Barren North	124
XIV.	Pigs Vacate in Favor of Preacher	139
XV.	In the Heart of the Rockies	145
XVI.	With the Indians on the Pacific Coast	150
XVII.	By a Norwegian Fjord	168
XVIII.	The Burden of the Burden Bearer	180
XIX.	In the Mountain Regions of the South	185
XX.	The "Awful Quiet" of the Farm	201
XXI.	"And Love Is All As Our Sun Dips West"	208
XXII.	Other Little Ships	220
XXIII.	How Luz Became Bethel	235
XXIV.	Facing His Maker Once a Day	239
XXV.	In Showery, Flowery England	246

# Guest Rooms Enjoyed and Endured

## In the King's Service

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### CHAPTER I.

#### At the End of the Steel

WE had reached the end of the steel. A box-car doing duty as passenger and freight depot stood alongside the track. The semi-weekly train service, just inaugurated, was bringing in daring pioneers and dastardly promoters. Already a little cluster of one-storey buildings had been hastily put up, alike for honorable and dishonorable purposes. Adjacent farm lands were being occupied. The Church had sent in its missionary and his hands needed strengthening, for already licentiousness and lawlessness were evident in the newly-formed community.

Except for the occasional visit of mounted police, such "mushroom" settlements were a law unto themselves.

The prairie sky-pilot eagerly clasped the hand of the one who was to be his fellow-worker for a few weeks. After a few hurried words of greeting, the visitor was asked whether he wished go to the hotel or to the Manse. The former was the best accommodation the town had—"a bit rough, of course". The latter had little more than four unplastered walls and a sincere welcome. The visitor chose the latter and instead of riding in the hotel sleigh trudged and stumbled over rutty and icy ways to the missionary's humble abode, with its tar-papered, wholesome-smelling walls and its warm welcome. "So glad you decided to come:

"we haven't what you are used to, but you sure are welcome", was the cordial greeting of the genial soul whose joy and cheeriness kept the otherwise barren little dwelling happily furnished. Any building would have grown brighter with the radiance of her presence. No further apologies were made nor were they needed.

The house contained only one bed and that was fully intended for the visitor. Only after his emphatic threat to go to the hotel were the kindly plans re-arranged and permission granted him to occupy the unmattressed top of two dry-goods boxes. The buffalo-robe from the sleigh and the preacher's winter coat made fairly good padding. By placing the coat buttons where they would not be rolled on, it was possible to occasionally give the weight-bearing joints a change, and thus get a fairly good night's rest. "Whatever you may say about your room," said the missionary, "after sleeping on those boxes, you can truthfully say we gave you good solid board."

A long clothes line across the shack with newspapers pinned neatly together, made a satisfactory curtain for the privacy of retiring. Another improvised curtain provided a corner designated "neutral territory", which corner served as a washroom and was occupied according to a morning schedule.

Three days after the visitor's arrival, winter descended with a vengeance and thereafter no water was available for ablutions until the bravest member of the household had started the fire and melted the ice in the iron pot—the latter being the only receptacle in which water could safely be left overnight. Two tin pails had been burst open by the expansion of the ice on a previous night. Only those who have lain beneath the bedding when the thermometer indoors registered

below zero can know the joy of having someone else get up first and of hearing the wood in the stove begin its comforting crackle.

And even when one's own turn came to be fireman and to brave the elements pyjama-clad, there was an exhilaration in the friskiness of movement that the temperature necessitated. Then, too, there was encouragement in the thought that one might possibly get back to bed before the blankets had cooled off, there to await until the fire had made dressing a less teeth-chattering operation. The missionary had not forgotten the favorite songs of College days, and on the mornings when "the Bishop", as the visitor was playfully called, insisted on lighting the fire, a muffled voice would be heard singing feelingly, "Oh! it's nice to get up in the morning, but it's nicer to stay in bed", and to the urgent invitation of "The Bishop" to arise and enjoy the freshness of the morn, the same voice would contentedly sing "Have courage, my boy, to say NO", the last word being sung with a humorously explosive emphasis.

There were no bureaus or washstands. Even boxes were at a premium, for the merchants were besieged on all sides for such useful articles, and it became one of the standard jokes to say that the storekeepers "hadn't a thing in empty boxes". The lack of bedroom facilities lost the visiting preacher a good razor. With other toilet requisites, it lay on a pasteboard box on the floor. The household pup took a fancy to the bone-handle and not only chewed it to slivers but split the blade, fortunately without causing himself any injury. When brought face to face with his evil doings, Buster looked up and wagged his stubby tail as if he had done something quite praiseworthy.

At the close of each day the problems of the work

would be discussed over the cocoa and toast as we huddled around the one and only stove which served all the purposes of cooking and heating.

For eight years these two brave souls had been on the hardest fields. "We came here because the Home Mission Superintendent couldn't seem to find anyone else to tackle the job. Perhaps if we had known the evils there were to combat we might have asked him to leave us at Miner's Creek, for things there were getting more encouraging than they had ever been.

"After I'd been here a month, I felt I'd have to hit the commercialized vice that was getting brazen beyond anything I'd ever known. I tried to show what must be the inevitable result in the town's life, and the awful dangers to which they were exposing their own boys and girls. I think I spoke appealingly, didn't I, Janet?" Janet nodded her head. "But the storm certainly broke when the service was over. Several of the men were mad clear through. One of them shook his fist in my face and told me to mind my own d--- business. They were making a living out of these women and if I opened my mouth on the subject again, they'd make it so d--- hot for me I'd have to leave the town inside of twenty-four hours. I came home a bit disheartened, but Janet helped me,—she always does, God bless her. However, I felt a bit better after getting my mail on Monday. Maybe I shouldn't show you the letter, but I'd like you to see that even in a "hell-hole", as some folks call this place, there are a few who stand for decency and righteousness."

He pulled an envelope from between two of his books. The letter read:

"Dear Parson:

"Maybe you thought yesterday that you were hitting

the trail alone, but there are a few of us guys who ain't gone so far as to want the kids to go to the dogs. You're putting up a good fight. Stay by it, pardner. Most of us have made d--- fools of ourselves and we ain't keen on having the kids land up the same way. Some of the guys that didn't have enough guts to stand by you yesterday, ain't going to give you the go-by if it comes to a showdown. I heard Bill McLeod say that the person who wasn't scared to hit 'em like you did yesterday, was white clear through, and when a sky-pilot is white, he's goin' to win out, yes siree.

"You can count on a few of us.

TIM B---."

"A rough sort of letter, perhaps, but I know these chaps; Tim is right, we're going to win out. Iniquity may be blatant and threatening, but at heart it's a coward. But sometimes," he added with a sigh, "I do get lonely for some men who will stand by my side and be out and out for God."

On Sunday morning we stood together in the flimsily-built hall where services were being held. Three weeks before I had worshipped within the glow of costly stained-glass windows and where the choir and altar were exquisitely finished in walnut; where was an organ costing almost fifty thousand dollars; where floors were beautifully and expensively covered, and where the elaborate electric fixtures alone would cost ten times as much as the entire building in which we met that morning.

What a contrast it all was! These unpainted scantlings; these rough planks for seats; these four common coal-oil lamps; this mud-stained, uncovered floor; this improvised pulpit that consisted of a merchandise box only partly covered by brown paper and a strip of

turkey-red. Yet when the congregation, of perhaps forty people, sang—

*"Jesus, where e'er Thy people meet,  
There they behold Thy mercy seat."*

some of us became strangely indifferent to our surroundings. It was worth journeying many a mile to watch the faces of the missionary and his good Janet as the hymn continued.

*"Where e'er they seek Thee Thou art found,  
And every place is hallowed ground."*

Then, too, there were others, including Tim, who had longings after better things. As one glanced at these yearning souls, all the crude externalities of the place of worship were lost sight of, and we were His children gathering with millions of others around one common mercy seat. We knew that Our Father as readily hears prayers from suppliants on rough planks as from those in exquisitely carved and costly pews. By the growing fervour of the singing one felt that at least a few of those present were conscious of a Divine Presence. No sensitive soul could have been unmoved as the hymn continued—

*"For Thou, within no walls confined,  
Inhabitest the humble mind;  
Such ever bring Thee where they come,  
And going, take Thee to their home."*

Wherever Janet and her faithful husband were, there was a place of worship.

The visitor was to go nine miles west for an afternoon service while the missionary preached fifteen miles east. Janet was superintendent of the local Sunday School. A hurried lunch and we were each off to our respective afternoon's task. It was an ideal Sunday.

The sun was shining brightly and there was that clarity of atmosphere that gives sunny Alberta an indescribable charm. The spirited bronchos were chafing to get away. The Swedish driver gave the word, and we moved off at a smart trot across the prairie.

In the dim distance, one hundred miles away, were the giant sentinels as they stood in their silent majesty, —those snow-capped peaks of the Canadian Rockies. Despite the cold weather, cattle were visible for many a mile across the treeless tracts of land. Horses, with coats made shaggy by exposure, were pawing the snow to find such fodder as was available.

At three o'clock we reached the little building where the service was to be held. The bronchos were tied to a bunch of lonely white poplars that seemed to be struggling for a living. Inside a few children were listening to the International Sunday School lesson. Perhaps the lessons brought out were not strictly accurate according to the text, but one was thankful for the efforts of workers who were doing their best to keep the light burning in the out-of-the-way places.

By the time the service proper commenced, fifty persons, representing ten or twelve different nationalities, were present. More than one heart became tender as the old story was simply told. Certain memories were awakened, and the life being lived did not tally with those memories. A benediction was uttered,—a few personal greetings, some of which revealed acquaintances of former days,—and we were urging our wiry little team towards a town fifteen miles away for an evening service.

The driver opened the conversation: "Me like to hear aboot Jesus. Me no can like to go to church and

not heer about Heem. Ve once hat von breecher talk about Hamblet all time. Mine wife, she not like heem. She say dat Hamblet was so mooch all kilt, she cannot want to hear about heem." That night the visiting preacher enjoyed the sincere hospitality of "mine wife", and it will remain as one of the pleasant memories of Sunny Alberta.

The following morning the journey was made back to the hospitable Manse for a continuation of the Special Services in the flimsily-built hall.

None of us can tell the result of it all, but at least one chum of Tim B---, in Tim's words "made the grade". Today he is lifting up his consecrated voice in a land over five thousand miles away, lifting it up in behalf of a Saviour Who one night met him, face to face, as he sat listening to passages from the Book of books by the flickering candle-light in that little western Manse that Janet had made a radiant centre of hospitality. Like all other dwellings that she and her devoted husband occupied in the great Westland, it was a house of prayer; and a house of prayer sends forth channels of influence that are unending in helpfulness.

Of all the guest-rooms that the writer has occupied, none gave him more genuine happiness than the one with the newspaper partition and the bedstead consisting of two dry-goods boxes. So long as the Church can produce unflinchingly brave, Christ-like souls like Janet and her husband, he has no fears for the ultimate victory. In Bill McLeod's words, they are "goin' to win out. Yes, siree!"

## CHAPTER II.

### Joseph's Fall From Grace --- As Told by His Wife

**A**TALL, angular woman, who had been listening for the familiar rattle of the old Union Bus, opened the door before the preacher could rap and said loudly and cheerily: "Come right in! Put your valise down there. Here Joseph—come and carry the preacher's bag up to the front room! Hang up your hat."

As an obedient and undersized man came slowly from the kitchen, Mrs. Joe Hawkins continued, "This is my man. Come into the room and set down. You'll be a bit tired. It's quite a journey from the city to this little burg, ain't it, and that train would most shake the piety out of a Baptist deacon. It's like the one our Jack used to call the Kick and Push Railway when he attended 'Queen's'. He said it always sounded as if they started the trains by dynamite and whenever they stopped, folks that hadn't travelled on that line before used to think it was a collision. He said it was kind o' hard on people with false teeth or wigs.

"I suppose you haven't had your supper yet? Take the rocker. I see you're looking at the piano. Do you play? You might try it—maybe, after you get a bite. We haven't had a bit of music since Sophie went to the city six months come Wednesday. Joseph tries it sometimes but he ain't musical; he sure ain't.

"We've been without a regular minister for three months now. Mr. Charlson, our last man, got a call to a bigger church. He lived next door to us, and he was as fine a neighbour as ever walked in shoe-leather. He was a good preacher too, mind you, but he was a

bit too fond of pitching into other people. Our cousin Emily from Toronto stayed a month with us. One Sunday when she was here he preached on 'Let your light so shine'. On the way home she said that he was like a preacher she knew in the city—he let his own light shine and tried to make it look brighter by blowing everybody else's out. But he was the best preacher in town, though that might not be saying very much. Some of 'em have the right aim in life but they're short of ammunition. We've got too many of 'em here. And say, you wouldn't believe all the sects we've got. Some of 'em are so small our Jack says they're only insects."

All the foregoing rapidly followed the preacher's arrival. For some time, in a loud, jerky voice, Mrs. Hawkins continued to express whatever crossed her mind. One had to listen—there was no chance of doing anything else. One look at her mouth and jaw was a reminder of the invitation card seen in some city offices: "If you want to know who's boss around here, start something doing." Her husband had long since accepted the fact of her leadership. At home and abroad he had learned to agree with her decisions. When going to church he was always a few feet behind his wife, and his appearance was suggestive of a faithful old dog who had crept out unknown to his owner, and was expecting to be sent home the minute his presence was detected. But Joe appreciated her masterfulness and did nothing without consulting her, and in return, as she jocularly said, "the little brute" was well fed. His favorite place was in the rocker by the kitchen stove, where he dozed as often as he could escape the duties of which his wife gave him too frequent reminders.

The preacher became a welcome guest, and during subsequent visits the Hawkins' home was always his

headquarters. The room assigned to him was a small, upper chamber with a sloping roof and a small gable window from which one could at least take in something of the splendor of the star-lit heavens and an interesting bit of the straggling village roadway. The mental atmosphere of the room was warmed by the effect of a "rising sun" bedquilt whose rays blazed in vivid tones. Hooked mats on the floor also proclaimed Mrs. Hawkins' handiwork. The furniture was plain but of solid proportions, and the whole room gave evidence that a good housekeeper was in charge.

In spite of her incessant chatter, Mrs. Hawkins was a most interesting and hospitable hostess. She was always busy, and when seated her conversation was usually accompanied by the click of her knitting needles. She had held the record for Red Cross work when woolen articles were constantly needed.

"Oh, you should have seen some of the socks knitted in this town," she confided to her visitor. "They needed labelling, for you wouldn't have known what they were by the shape of 'em. And then the lumps in the knitting"—she raised her hands deprecatingly, as she continued, "Upon my word, if I was to cross my heart and spit, I'd be telling the truth when I say some of 'em would have irritated a table leg. Jack used to say that the boys that got 'em would be tickled to death—and they sure would."

On a subsequent visit, while in the Hawkins' home, the preacher noticed Joe's hand was bandaged, and on inquiring the cause Joe explained that the cow had been "actin' kind o' ugly lately" and had kicked him. His wife supplemented the information by saying in a gruffly good-natured way, "She was trying to kick a little sense into him but she just missed." Joe smiled feebly

and said, "Well, anyhow, I ain't never fell into the cistern."

His retort brought a hearty laugh from Mrs. Hawkins, who slapped her hands upon her lap and exclaimed, "Say! he's got one on me this time. Will I ever forget that morning! Sit down! it's too long to listen to standing up." Joe moved quietly over to the corner behind the piano ready to enjoy himself. There was as much delight on his face as he dare express. The fact that he had "got one" on her was unusually satisfactory to him.

"Of course," she snapped out, giving Joe a look that temporarily took the satisfied smile off his face, "it was his usual carelessness that did it and it might have been worse than it was, but I've laughed many a time since.

"We always get up early on washdays, and in the summer I have the tubs on the back stoop. Joseph was carrying the water for me, and as the pump wasn't working, he had to keetch it up through the trap-door in the kitchen floor. I thought he was all through, and I was getting something out of the cupboard on the wall when didn't he come in again and I never noticed that he opened up the cistern door. He went off without shutting it and I stepped back and fell ker-plunk into the thing. Both feet of me went into the cistern and I got an awful jolt; I sure thought I was killed. I might have gone right in but my clothes were pushed away up below my armpits like one of them lifebelts, and I was wedged in between the joists. Y'know the opening to them cisterns ain't very big, and I was in as tight as if I'd been hit by a pile-driver."

Joe was evidently having happy memories, for although he was trying to hide it, the preacher could see he was chuckling at the predicament his wife had been in. Whenever she glanced his way he used his red

bandana on his nose and sought to conceal his merriment.

"Well, anyway," she continued, "I was over my knees in water and I was down so far and jammed in that tight, I couldn't wiggle myself loose. My arms was in such shape, I couldn't get any leverage with 'em. I called and called to Joseph, but hadn't he gone down the hill at the back of the garden to tether the cow." There was another reproving look at the little man in the corner. "It seemed like an hour before he came back. He always was as slow as molasses, but he beat his record for slowness that morning. I was pretty well done out. The water was that cold I was most frozen below my knees, and what with the fright and the squirming to get out, I guess the top end of me was in a fever.

"When at last he heard me and came in, it took him a spell to understand what had happened. I guess he thought I'd shrunk and was sitting on the floor tailor-fashion just for amusement. It wasn't a bit funny to me, but he seemed to get fun out of it, and when he started to try to pull me up, I knew he wasn't half lifting for laughing. I got mad and told him not to stand there like an old fool, but to get me out of that water hole. But he couldn't move me, and I couldn't help any for there was no place to put my feet; they were just dangling in that cold water and I was kind o' weak. By and by he pulled the table over and while he lifted, I tried to help by taking hold of the table leg, but it didn't do any good. I suppose I'd been getting further in while he was fooling with that cow. He got a bit scared after a while, and so did I. Well! At last he had to go and get Tom Reid—one of our neighbors—and between them they got me out, but I was that sore I could scarcely

crawl for a few days, and as for colours, say! my skin was as many colours as a rainbow. I put myself to bed like I was a basket of eggs, and I never rolled over for a week. But that pump was fixed right away, mind you, and I made Joseph nail that cistern lid down, and it's goin' to stay down."

The memory of her predicament kept Joe amused for some time after the above narration, and several times a suppressed laugh exploded by way of his nostrils with such an irresistibly funny effect that the visitor got as much amusement out of his "snickering", as Mrs. Hawkins called it, as Joe did out of the cistern story.

During the preacher's last visit to Ridgeville, he learned with deep sorrow that Joe had seriously fallen from grace. Up to a few months before he had been a man of good habits and of guarded and unpolluted language. The cause of the outbreak could not be mentioned while Joe was present, the memories being too exasperating and embarrassing for him to maintain evenness of temper if the event was in any way recalled. But when her husband was away for the mail, Mrs. Hawkins could not resist the temptation to tell her ministerial friend of Joe's downfall.

The early days of their married life had been lived on a farm, and when they moved to the edge of the village they got a house with two acres of land so that they might keep a few chickens, a cow, and a couple of pigs. The last-named animals were indirectly the cause of Joe's transgression.

Not far from the back kitchen door stood a little barrel, not much larger than a nail-keg, into which the kitchen scraps were dumped. Sometimes Joe would wheel this to the pigsty and sometimes carry it in his arms.

On the Sunday morning of the church anniversary, his wife was hurrying him through his chores so that they would be in good time for service. As the wheelbarrow was not handy, Joe prepared to carry the barrel of swill to the pigs, but as he was wearing his "boiled shirt" he conceived a new and cleaner method of carrying their meal than the one he ordinarily adopted. Placing a pad of rags on his head, he lifted the barrel on to the kitchen window-sill and then stooped low enough to place his head under it, and proceeded in fisherman-like fashion to carry his load to its destination. Not being used to that method of transportation, he found his load rather uncomfortable, and proceeded to shift it about a bit. As is often recorded of serious accidents, "just how it happened will probably never be known". —probably Joe had been hanging on to his load a bit too heavily—but the sad fact remains that the bottom of the barrel suddenly gave way, and Joe's head, shoulders and body received what had been intended for the pigs.

Joe was never very quick in his movements, and by the time he tried to get out of his dirty difficulty, his head was well in the barrel. Some nails were protruding and got caught in the clothing around his shoulders, so that his head was imprisoned. With soured milk, soppy bread, potato peelings, scraps of carrot and other vegetables over his precious boiled shirt and Sunday trousers, and his head surrounded by the inside of the swill-barrel, it could hardly be expected that Joe would be in a reverent frame of mind, but as Mrs. Hawkins, for the first time in the preacher's hearing, dropped her voice to a whisper, it was evident Joe had all through the years concealed a vocabulary of which his wife never dreamed.

"My sakes!" she whispered, "I've heard bad language many a time—I've often said it's a disgrace what you have to hear along the streets at nights, but this was a Sunday morning"—there was a remote suggestion of a twinkle in her eyes—"and I never heard the likes of what was coming from that barrel. What with that slush all over him and them nails sticking into his clothes, and maybe into his hide, he sure was mad. You see I was all dressed for church so I couldn't help him out of the muss he was in, and there he was a-pulling and a-sweating and a-swearin perfectly terrible. At last I got him quieted down a bit and moved him over to some clean grass. I got a little stick and while he lifted the barrel a bit I unfastened his clothing from off the nails that were all around the bottom of the thing.

"I knew he couldn't get ready in time for church so I started without him. I guess I shouldn't have said anything to him just then, but I was thinking about the pigs losing their breakfast, so while he was stripping off in the back shed, I called to him and told him he'd better give the pigs a few potatoes when he had changed his clothes. He don't often answer back, but he growled out real ugly that the —— pigs could starve for all he cared. Ain't it awful how a little thing will put a man into an ugly temper?

"It clean spoiled the Anniversary for me. Even when the minister was praying I could see Joseph a-squirming with that barrel around his head and his clothes all dripping with that swill. Several times I came near laughing right out loud, and as I was a-telling my neighbour, Mrs. Cliffe, I nearly swallowed my tonsils gulping back the laughs that wanted to get out." She glanced at the window. "Here he comes now. Don't you let on that you know anything about it. The

good Lord knows I wouldn't start him saying again the likes of what I heard that Sunday morning; no, not for all the pigs in the world, I wouldn't. He sold the pigs that same week, and he keeps the scraps in a zinc pail now. I guess he don't intend running any more risks."

## CHAPTER III.

## Sharing the Bed With Danny

**N**O other home in the district was available for the visiting preacher so there was no help for it, he had to sleep with ten-year-old Danny. The shack contained three beds and there were eight to be accommodated. It was useless to make any other suggestion for the shack contained no lounge nor sofa, nor even chairs that could be used as a possible excuse for sleeping separately. Danny's usual berth was with his father and mother, but the coming of the preacher necessitated a general change.

The youngest sister was delighted at the prospect of taking Danny's place alongside of mother, and the other three girls were crowded into a bed that was never expected to hold more than two.

"Danny's a bit restless," said his mother, with a smile, "but he never wakes up when he strikes the pillow, and he's as good as one of those hot water bottles. We can't keep a fire going all night, and after it has been out a while, it gets a bit frosty along the logs. It was twenty below most nights last week. When it gets that way Danny snuggles up real close."

The last bit of information did not add to the preacher's enthusiasm over his bed-fellow. Danny's general appearance was not encouraging. Facilities for keeping clean are not many in the kind of shack occupied by the Wiggins family and Danny really had no use for "facilities". He washed his hands and face only under the utmost pressure, and a bath in winter-time was an unthought-of thing. When the "slough" was warm

enough, it was difficult to keep him out of the water; but to Danny's type of boy, a swimming hole and a wash-bowl are as different as Paradise and Hades. His towsy hair looked as though it had never come in contact with a comb. In the shack his coarse shirt and semi-long trousers were all he could be persuaded to wear. The latter were so large and ill-fitting that they gave no indication as to whether Danny was coming or going.

Shortly after supper on the night of the preacher's arrival, the mother got Danny behind the curtain, where the crudely-made and unpainted bedstead stood. Danny had to listen to a number of "don'ts" that also reached the ears of the preacher. The kindly mother had done all she could to make the preacher's corner clean and comfortable, and Danny's presence in a room was liable to upset any arrangements made. "Now, don't you sit on the bed with them dirty pants of yours. No! you can't get in bed that way! Now, Danny, you undress properly! You're going to put on your Sunday shirt now that you're sleeping with the minister." Danny's answer was in a tone that suggested the honour of sleeping with the minister was scarcely worth the ordeal and sacrifice his mother's suggestions involved.

Two or three hours later the preacher did his best to get Danny out of his monopolistic position across the bed, and lay alongside of his soundly sleeping little bedfellow. It was not long ere the mother's prophecy was being fulfilled, and Danny was "snuggling" up to the preacher with much more enjoyment to Danny than to his bed-mate. The dirty little arms and towsy head seemed to vie with one another in getting into the immediate vicinity of the preacher's nose and mouth.

At last a position that was mutually satisfactory was

secured and Danny and preacher were alike in the land of dreams.

Early in the morning the curtain was pushed aside and a tin bowl containing warm water was placed on the rough box that served as a table. "I thought you might like warm water to wash in. Danny, you come out now and bring your clothes so's the minister will have room to dress." Danny was scarcely wide enough awake to heed his mother's command. After a few minutes he pushed back the hair from his forehead and became intensely interested in watching the preacher.

At last his open-mouthed surprise at the intricacies and mysteries that were involved in the preacher's method of dressing could be restrained no longer. With something akin to a sigh, he said, "Say, Mister, how often do you wash yerself like that?" With a smile came the answer, "I don't often do it just like that, but I like to have at least a good sponge off every morning. Water is a bit scarce out here, isn't it?" Evading the question, Danny asked, "Say, Mister, how often do you pull that there black thing through yer hair like you was doin' for sich a spell?" "Well! I'm afraid my hair often gets rough, Danny. I carry a comb in this little pocket, see! then I can comb my hair whenever it needs it—maybe half a dozen times a day."

Danny's face had on it an expression of mingled pity and disgust as he said wearily, "You must be an awful pile o' trouble to yerself, Mister."

Breakfast with Danny revealed the fact that he was "just an appetite with a skin pulled over him." Not until that morning had he ever been present where family worship was conducted. The reading was of the lad's small store of loaves and fishes and the preacher had Danny look on the Testament with him. It was

something new for Danny to kneel down, and he went about it rather awkwardly, as though uncertain what came next. However, it was in the approach to the Father of us all that a strange, deep yearning for Danny came into the preacher's heart. He saw more than an untidy, towsy-headed boy.

And that yearning led to efforts to quickly gain Danny's confidence. He helped him to carry in the wood and chopped through the ice for the daily water supply. Then there were ways of adding to the lad's fun. A few old boards were fashioned into a sleigh that did quite well on the snow-covered slope that gave them a good start to the ice on the slough. The preacher had shovelled the snow so as to make a surface across which they could easily glide. Within a week the two were good friends and Danny accompanied the preacher whenever allowed. He was permitted to go to two of the evening meetings conducted by the visitor, and especially enjoyed the music.

It was one of the great events in his uneventful life when he was permitted to see the pictures that were to be thrown on the screen in the little hall. The illustrated gospel songs gave him unusual delight and he told his mother he could have "listened to them forever without being tired."

Within two weeks Danny was showing more concern about his hands and face and hair, and was following the preacher's example in a number of ways. An illustrated edition of a pocket Testament, in which the preacher had printed the boy's name in full, was the first gift of any value that Danny had received and his pride in its possession was very manifest.

Danny amused all by a question he asked about certain pains in his left leg. He thought his mother had

treated the matter rather lightly when she told him that they were just growing pains. "But they're only in one leg, Mother." "Well, maybe," replied the mother, "but I tell you they're only growing pains."

Her reply gave Danny considerable anxiety about his future physical welfare, and at last he began feeling his right leg, seeking, and even hoping, to locate pains in it also. The result of the probing was by no means satisfactory to him. His fears were increasing. With sincere concern he asked quietly, "Mother, if the growing pains are only in one leg, will it be longer than the other?" For many a day thereafter those who knew of Danny's question could easily embarrass the bashful boy by gazing steadily at his legs, in an assumed endeavour to note any difference in length.

On the last evening of the preacher's stay in the lonely settlement he had a talk with Danny as they walked back from the slough. "I believe you are going to be a fine boy, Danny. I shall be a long distance away from you, but I am going to count you as one of my friends. Every day I shall be reading from a little book like the one you have, and I shall be thinking of how my friend Danny is reading from the same book, and—his arm was thrown around the lad's shoulder—it would be one of the biggest disappointments I could have if my Danny was not true and brave and clean. You remember about the boy who brought all he had to Jesus. You are doing that, aren't you, Danny? You are going to let Him count on you to help make this world a bit happier. You won't go back on me, will you, Danny, because I want you for Jesus." The little lad with the coarse shirt and baggy trousers looked up into the preacher's face and said with a bashful smile, "I'd like to be jes like you and preach." "God bless you,

Danny, my boy. I'm not anxious you should be like me, but I want you to be like Him, like Jesus. He was so good and brave and kind."

When the sleigh came early next morning to take the preacher to the railway station, twelve miles distant, Danny was not in sight. There was no response to the calling of his name. The preacher hurried around the little shack and into the cow stable. With his face on his arms as he leaned against the logs in a dark corner, the little lad was shedding many tears. "I don't want you to go away, never!" was his only response to the kindly touch of his preacher friend's hand. A few farewell words of confidence in Danny's future and the preacher hurried to the big box sleigh. Wrapped in well-worn blankets, and with a carpet of straw, they started on their cold journey across the prairie. As the preacher turned to get another look at the shack that had been his home for the past three weeks, he saw the little lad with the coarse shirt and baggy trousers gazing wistfully in the direction of the sleigh. A little hand responded to the farewell wave and then the boyish figure disappeared—perhaps to go back to the dark corner again.

\* \* \* \* \*

Twelve years have passed. There are many new settlers today in the district where once stood the Wiggins' shack. And in the same district stands a small church in which there is a Sunday School Superintendent whose name is Danny Wiggins. And two thousand miles away is a preacher who gives thanks to God for the strange little chap who, twelve years ago, shared with him the spare room behind the curtain in the log shack on Windy Plains, and who has so grown in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus as to be leading others into paths of righteousness.

## CHAPTER IV. Old Billy of Paradise Plains

**A**COWBOY acquaintance gave any missionary who might happen along two "earfuls of advice" as he expressed it. "If you're a wise guy, stranger, you'll let 'em know quick what you are; it'll save you a pile of trouble. Cowboys is a different brand to the rest of Westerners and ain't any easier for tenderfoots to understand than a bucking broncho or a wild steer. Most of 'em speaks two languages, one what does for preachers and the like, and one what don't. And then don't get shoving your nose into other folks' business. 'Tain't necessary to be inquisitive about the brand on the other guy's horse." As the missionary drew rein at the door of a rudely constructed cabin in the heart of the ranching country, he recalled his cowboy friend's advice. When, therefore, the tousy and dirtily picturesque old occupant responded to the missionary's greeting, he was at once informed as to the name and mission of his visitor.

"Well, gol darn! A preacher!" he exploded. It was not just the words he said, but the way in which he said them that was significant. As he spoke he looked the preacher over as a judge at a cattle show might appraise a calf. The tone and words sounded decidedly antagonistic and profane.

The first impulse of the preacher was to get away without further unpleasantness and continue his journey to some other halting place. But there was a hidden splendor in the weather-beaten face of the surly old rancher which to a large extent softened his abrupt utterances. The preacher felt that this lonely settler on the wide plains was a good deal better than he

sounded. Perhaps the old chap read the thoughts of his unexpected caller. In a less harsh voice he introduced himself by volunteering the information that around the district the folks called him "Old Billy". "I guess that's good enough."

Introductions having thus taken place, there was a mutually better feeling. "You see, it's this way," he continued, "I ain't goin' to ask you to come inside, for I'm the dirtiest old devil in this valley." It would have been easy for most persons on the moment to have agreed with Billy in his perhaps injudicious, but thoroughly merited self-disparagement. His appearance reminded one of the man who sent a note to a soap manufacturer stating that three years ago he had bought a cake of his soap "since which" he had "used no other". Old Billy had not added much to his daily duties by the use of soap and water. His filthy and torn clothing had fully fifty per cent. of the buttons missing; his head and hair were as untidy and unclean as his clothing. His own superlative classifications of himself seemed therefore fully justified. Billy continued to gaze curiously at his visitor, and seemed to be waiting for some comment on his own self-condemnation, but the Sky Pilot "wist not what to say". From the cabin door, however, the cattle upon the thousand hills were in sight, and the conversation led from the excellent condition of horses and other stock on the ranges, to the weather, the new railway projection, and the incoming of homesteaders. As the Sky Pilot glanced over the few buildings that comprised Billy's property, something arrested his attention, and he asked rather eagerly: "What do you intend to do with that building you haven't finished?" The building in question had evidently been standing in an unfinished state for many

months. Gazing in silence at the four log walls to which his attention had been directed, the rancher was evidently calculating. Slowly he answered the question. "Guess it's about four years since I started that building. I'll use it for a stable if I ever get it finished. But I don't seem to find time to work at it any more. Allus s' many odd jobs, I don't know which to start on first."

There was a tone of hopelessness in his voice. It was a hopelessness that strengthened the preacher's courage. "How would it be if I came around and gave you a hand with it? I've done a bit of building in my day." Having made the offer the speaker hastened to attach "the string". "You won't need it for horses until the fall, and for the summer months I could use it for a church; we need some place for our meetings. Last summer they were held in Piper's place, but it isn't very convenient for them or for us."

A smile crossed the wrinkled face of the lonely cattleman, and the preacher was hoping that the idea was not objectionable to him. Finally the old man burst into a hearty laugh. Running his fingers through his unkempt, grizzled hair, he announced in no uncertain tones that there would be no church on his place. "No siree! Not on Old Billy's ranch." It would be all right to complete the building, but to use it as a place of worship! Never! He simply would not consider the matter for one moment. The very idea was ludicrous and had to be given up if the preacher was to be the assistant carpenter or superintendent. Finally it was agreed that with his volunteer helper, Billy would proceed to roof and floor the building. The material was at hand and the weather favorable. A hand-clasp sealed the agreement for the joint effort.

They talked on beneath Alberta's cloudless sky un-

til the sun began to settle towards the western horizon, for, although in consequence of the early spring the weather was fine and warm, the days were still short. Much as Billy disliked to expose the interior of his abode to a stranger's eyes, he had too much western hospitality to willingly turn any man away when the shadows of evening were falling. There was a consequent hesitancy in his good-bye, which seemed to indicate a play for time while his spirit of hospitality struggled with his sense of shame over his dirty shack.

"If you don't mind taking what I have, I suppose you may as well come in and have a bite of supper with me." The invitation was not nearly as cordial as was the acceptance, for the preacher was anxious for a night's lodging and desired to get better acquainted with Billy. His few personal necessities were in a saddle bag, for having no fixed place of abode, and as a scout in the King's Business, he was ready to call any place home where he might be permitted to hang up his hat. Two four-inch nails constituted Billy's hat-rack.

For a number of years the cabin which housed Billy had been used for both man and beast. "One night," he informed his guest, he was so sick, he "could scarcely crawl over the cow to get into bed." There were no partitions in the shack. On one side of the dimly lighted room a poor attempt had been made to fix stalls for horses, but at this season of the year Billy had full possession. In the centre of the floor was a large packing case, covered with a variety of dishes and utensils all equally dirty. It was Billy's general-purpose table and as occasion required served in the place of several articles of household furniture, that would have been deemed necessary in the ordinary house.

In one of the corners lay a pile of potatoes. Attach-

ed to the wall opposite his cattle stalls were two bunks. As the evening wore away, the extra bunk was, with apologies, placed at the disposal of the missionary if he cared to stay in such a "dirty hole". It was Billy's guest room. Throughout the evening's conversation Billy made it perfectly clear that he was under no misapprehension as to the condition of his shack. Unlike some folks living under similar conditions, Billy had not lost a certain disgust over the dirty drift of his housekeeping habits. Lacking though the place was in comfort or anything approaching refinement or cleanliness, yet to the visitor's tired body it meant a resting place by the wayside. Ere he slept he thanked God for giving him contact with this strange old character, who almost against his will had offered him the shelter of his roof. Might there not be possibilities even here where perhaps feelings lay buried that friendliness and love might restore?

During the preceding week the preacher had been among cowboys forty miles eastward over the plains. Some of them were getting ready for a "Stampede" that was being staged in a distant city. Billy was greatly interested in hearing of that visit and in getting such news of the stampede as was available. It caused him to become unusually talkative. The hour of retiring was consequently considerably delayed.

In his earlier days Billy had "roped" many a wild horse and had joined his cowboy pals in saddling the terrified animals, an operation that needs great agility, skill and daring. Never having had a rope or bit of harness on their bodies, these wild possessors of the boundless plains plunge and kick and rear in a frenzy of anger and fright. The cowboy, while on this exciting job, must often move hands and feet at maximum

speed to avoid disaster or even death. The efforts of four or five experts are sometimes defeated by the rope being jerked so madly as to break it, or to make it impossible for the boys to retain their footing and their hold. With a dangling rope the freed animal gallops wildly away from its captors.

Billy had taken his share of the dangers of breaking in the animals that had been lassoed. Many a fall he had had, and several times bones had been broken. "Gosh, I've had 'em buck and jump and double-up and shove their heads between their front feet, and then in two winks paw the air so's no man on God's earth could stay on 'em. Take some riding, them wild devils do! 'Course, an old cowboy can stick on longer'n a tenderfoot, but the best rider in the foothills can't stick on some of 'em very long. No sir, he jest can't do it. He'd darn soon get rich at a stampede if he could. They used to get \$25.00 a 'jump'. Maybe you don't know what I mean. It's this way. If he can stay on after the broncho has shook the daylights out of him and darned nigh turned somersaults and stood mighty nigh straight up in the air—yessir, I've seen 'em up so straight that they've fell backwards—well sir, ain't no rider can stick it then—but if he hangs on for four of them hellfire jumps as we used to call 'em, he gets a hundred dollars.

"There's strict rules, you bet, and the judges hev to keep a smart eye to watch the rider's hands and feet and see he don't bust the regulations. If there's a saddle and he 'pulls leather', (clings to the saddle), that disqualifies him. It's some show, you bet. A circus ain't in it with roping and riding bronchos. A circus jest has its reg'lar acts but there ain't one darned thing reg'lar about a wild horse. Never know what's a-coming next. )

Ain't nothing madder runs the jungles than a broncho if he's fought you through the roping an' the saddling. Say, I've seen 'em jump into the air and after they've chucked the rider, kind o' bunch their feet together and hit the ground where they think he was just as if they wanted to scort his insides out. Wild! You ought to see 'em with ears laid back as tight to their hide as a postage stamp is to a letter. When you see 'em with ears that way and tail straight out, there's the devil to pay if you get in their way. I saw an Eastern chap trying to get some pictures one time when we was doing a bit o' roping. We had one of the wildest brutes you ever laid eyes on and he got away from five of us. He lit off in the direction of this chap with his picture machine. We yelled at him to clear out. Lucky for him there was a fence near. Did he make time? Gosh, he'd a made a better picture than any of the bronchos. He nigh tore the pants off himself getting through the fence. He dropped his picture thing, he was so scared when he see the way that brute was a-flying in his direction. It 'ud a bin kingdom-come for that picture guy if one of them lightning heels had hit him.

"Ever see'd one of the boys riding a wild steer? Ain't, eh?" Billy lifted the lantern and hunted through some old papers tucked away in a box nailed to a scantling. Two badly soiled picture postcards showed steers being roped and ridden. "See that feller! He's going some, eh? You can see by the hoofs and dust he's making time. When they get a steer real mad he sure hits a pace and its a mighty purty trick to rope him."

Billy tipped down the smoky lantern glass and wiped away some of the soot that had accumulated. "Maybe you kin see better now." His face and voice were alike interestingly animated. He was living over again those

wildly exhilarating and recklessly carefree days of youthful cowboy life. "Look at this other big brute! Wild, eh? You bet! Wouldn't think he could jump that high and get his big carcass into that shape, would you?"

The picture showed a steer with a cowboy clinging with hands and knees on the animal's almost perpendicular back. "I see that one meself," added Billy. "One of the heaviest brutes you ever set eyes on; but say! didn't he put up a show! He just went rip-roaring mad when anybody touched his back. Some steers kind o' take a breathing spell once in a while, but 'Cannon Ball', as the boys called him, never let up a second. He'd rip the ground and buck and jump and roll over and pretty nigh stand on his head and keep hoofs and head and backbone and tail and every other gol-darned part of him a-going like lightning.

"Get hurt? Sure the boys get hurt! That's part o' the game. 'Cannon Ball' put three o' the best riders out o' business that day inside of an hour—two of 'em was put in the hospital for quite a spell, ribs busted in and legs smashed. But seems like the more danger there is, the more the boys like it, and the gang that watches the show likes it too. If nobody gets hurt they don't think they've got their money's worth. Folks is queer that way. They like to see a few guys badly busted up. Well, that day they kept Devil-Dare-Dick to the last. That's him. He had a grip like a vice. When he got his hands and knees on a steer, you'd think he was rivetted to the animal's bones. But he knew how to let go quick enough when old Cannon Ball did his rolling-over trick. It takes some smart moving to slide off so's to get clear of danger and yet be near enough to

jump on again 'fore a steer can get clean on his feet and say goodbye.

Dick was the only feller what could 'dog' Cannon Ball. What's that? Don't know what 'dogging' a steer is? Well, I guess tain't what a preacher would advise to be done, but it gen'ally works."

Billy described in detail the disgusting method of quieting a steer by 'dogging' it. After exhibiting his skill by riding without touching the infuriated animal's head, the cowboy grabs horns or ears and if he is expert enough he bends over and bites the nose of the steer. If he cannot reach the nose he bites the ear. Often the most unmanageable animal will be quieted by this repulsive method. Billy explained the result by adding, "I guess it gives the wild old devil something else to think about."

Another trick of the expert rider to master his animal is to quickly twist the head. If done properly it throws the steer right over on its back. The rider has to move with skilful rapidity or he would be crushed by the animal falling on him. In later years one of the barbarously popular ways of getting a steer thoroughly excited and rushing at top speed is to use an automobile for "scaring" purposes. By various ways, and by the use of specially constructed noise-producers, the machine can be made to put terror into any living beast. When steer and car are travelling at a high rate the chauffeur speeds alongside of the steer: the cowboy, while standing on the running board, leaps to the back of the animal, and the contest that follows between man and beast gives a great thrill to the onlookers.

Old Billy continued so animated over his cowboy reminiscences that he would have remained out of his bunk still longer. His guest had to curtail his attempted

narration of the gambling habits of his cowboy companions. The habit of "shaking the dice" or "throwing" as Billy termed it, was general. Visiting a nearby village for purchases, a cowboy would offer to "throw" for his groceries. If the grocer won, his customer would pay double the price of his purchases; if the cowboy won, the goods were his without cost. The same method might be adopted with a half-dozen other merchants. In a cowboy town where the preacher once stayed for three weeks, a well-known elder in the little church told him of one cowboy who won an automobile and filled it with clothing and provisions, all secured by "his extraordinary run of luck in 'throwing'".

"On the other hand," continued the elder, "I've known one of those young ranchers come into the village and lose everything he had by 'throwing'. Even his broncho might be left behind. Yet he'd go whistling down the road as if he'd done something to brag about. Maybe on the way home he'd meet another cowboy whom he'd persuade to toss the dice, and before they'd be through his luck would have changed and the chap he'd met would have to do the walking, and maybe the chap who left the village having lost everything, would come galloping back and ride down the whole length of the main street to let us see that his luck had changed. Good stuff a lot of them are, though they are rough and not particular about the language they use, but there's nothing dishonourable or mean about them."

Billy had gone the pace with the rest of those young prairie pioneers when the West was "wild and woolly", and he was quite willing to continue recalling these distant memories. But the hour was late and though Billy's guest "shelf" was unattractive, the preacher at last suggested they had better continue their chat in the morn-

ing. The pure air of the open plains does much to help one forget the dirt and discomfort of such a shack as Billy's, and ere long preacher and rancher—strange room-mates—were enjoying the blessedness of sound sleep.

Billy may have washed himself thoroughly once in a while, although there were no indications of his having done so, and he certainly did not do so the next morning. As there were only a few dirty rags which were used for both hands and dishes, the preacher excused himself for getting a clean-up outside where the pump was close at hand. He carried his own soap and towel, and so saved Billy any apologies along the lines of not supplying these articles. From a box under his bunk, Billy took out a piece of bacon, and with his general-purpose knife cut off a few rashers for the morning meal. An old tin lid of a biscuit box answered the purpose of frying pan. The only appetizing thing about the breakfast was the smell from the bacon in the process of cooking.

But Billy's acquaintance had been made and there was no uncertainty about his willingness to have the preacher come back again. The mutual undertaking to complete the unfinished building was carried out.

After many hours of toil the roof and floor were completed, and the place made to look fairly presentable. Finally Billy gave his consent to have it opened to the community in the way his preacher-friend desired. "All right, we'll warm it with a service instead of a dance." The announcement went forth throughout the district that Divine service would be conducted at Old Billy's ranch on the following Sunday at 7 p.m. A few cowboys were among those who gathered. They were there more out of curiosity and because they had no

other place to go than by any desire to attend a religious meeting. Planks, supported by nail kegs, were the only seats available. Some of the children present had never before been at a church service, and they gazed steadily at the missionary as he sang and prayed and spoke, doubtless wondering what he was going to do next. Although apparently interested in the project, old Billy was not present. The preacher did most of the singing, as the congregation seemed reticent about joining in—they had not been accustomed to taking part in public gatherings. "Unto the hills around do I lift up my longing eyes" was beautifully appropriate to the geographic setting of Billy's homestead. The snow-crowned hills in all their grandeur stood out majestically against the evening sky.

As the preacher closed the service his spirit seemed overwhelmed by a sense of futility. He retired to his bunk in Billy's cabin with a feeling of lonesomeness and disappointment. The service had seemed so lifeless, for practically no one had joined in the singing. Then, too, he was desperately disappointed that his old rancher friend had not been present. He had fully expected to see him there.

The weeks passed quickly and the little congregation grew in numbers and interest. One Sunday some of the worshippers, turning a bend in the trail, could see a figure standing at the door of the place of meeting. "We must be late", one of them remarked, spurring up his horse, "I see the preacher's looking for us." To their surprise it was not the preacher in the doorway, but old Billy himself. From its long resting place in the bottom of a trunk he had resurrected a black suit, which he had carefully brushed and pressed. The neighbours, who had never seen him in anything but overalls

and a dirty shirt or sweater, were all agreed that although clothes do not make the man, they certainly help in that direction. Billy was, as one of them expressed it, "perty nigh to looking like a decent human."

Whatever Billy thought of the service, he made no comment. Perhaps it was a case of still waters flowing deeply, for it was evident he was doing some serious thinking. Later on, the preacher learned that Sunday after Sunday from the beginning of the services, Billy had listened to the message, although too much ashamed of himself to be seen in the congregation. On this particular late summer Sabbath evening the preacher, who was spending the night with Billy, suggested what he had never yet attempted. "Billy, I haven't bothered you much about religion, but I'm here for no other purpose than to try to serve God and my fellow-man. I never feel the day is quite properly closed in any home where I'm given a bed unless we have prayer before retiring. Do you mind if I read a few verses and have prayer?"

Billy answered in a strangely quiet voice, "That's all right."

From his pocket Testament and Psalms the preacher read a few verses from the penitential fifty-first Psalm and then some words of invitation from the Friend of Sinners. After the Amen of the prayer, he shook hands with the rugged old rancher. "Good night, Billy. God bless you."

"Sit down a minute, preacher," said Billy. "I've got a few things to tell you." To the surprise of the preacher he started off by saying, "You're going to lose this church o' yours; ain't going to let you keep it much longer." There was a trace of a smile on the weather-browned face as the preacher looked surprisedly at him.

"I never told you that I have a wife," he confided. "I guess I was too much ashamed of myself to own to it. When a man is content to live with beasts he soon gets beastly. I hit the pace for a while, and when my wife refused to let me drag her down I sank to the dirty level you found me in on that spring night when you rode up for the first time. I didn't want you. I thought I hated preachers. Well, maybe I'm getting my eyes opened. At any rate I've been writing to my wife and telling her about the church what's going to be made into a decent house, and she is coming back to live with me." A long silence followed. "Thank God she's coming back to a new husband" he said, in almost a whisper; a whisper that was uttered in a voice husky with emotion. He rose to his feet and stood gazing thoughtfully at the beauty of the Creator's handiwork stretched out in amazing grandeur for scores of miles westward to foothills and mountain peaks. The last pale sunset tints were fading in the west, and the peaceful mantle of the night was falling over the plains and hills. The glory of it all entered both souls. But it was clear that Billy was seeing more than moonlit foothills and mountains, so the preacher walked outside and left him with his memories and perhaps with his prayerful resolutions. The preacher also was thinking of things invisible, and seeing them; of voices unuttered, and hearing them. Clearly the words came to him—

*"The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit."*

On Monday morning the two men arose with joy in their hearts and with enthusiasm started planning the transformation of the stable-church into a house. There

were to be a combined living and dining room, a kitchen and two bedrooms.

Six weeks later Billy introduced the preacher to his wife. Together the three of them sat in a room comfortably furnished, and with those evidences, on all sides, of the feminine touch that gives to a home its charm. With humorous embellishments Billy described to his wife the beginning of the strange partnership that resulted in converting a stable into a church, and a church into a residence. "And this house," said Old Billy emphatically, "will be available for religious services as long as my preacher-partner requires it." Pointing in the direction of the one spare room, he said with equal emphasis, "That room is there for the preacher whenever he comes this way."

With the advent of the homesteaders, the large ranches were broken up and shacks of bachelor farmers began to dot the landscape. But in that land of shacks, the home of Old Billy stands out to this day as the community's Bethel, and the story of the old rancher's hesitatingly-given hospitality in the dirtiest shack on the plains is often repeated by Billy's many admiring friends who frequently gather for worship beneath the roof that still contains a Prophet's Chamber, a chamber that is probably occupied by more Ambassadors of the Cross than any other guest-room within a hundred miles of Paradise Plains.

## CHAPTER V.

### A Night On a Prairie Reserve

III HAD spoken to the Indian children in the afternoon and had told what I imagined to be one of my most amusing and effective stories. I was rather humbled and distressed over the fact that I had not succeeded in getting more than the remotest suggestion of a smile. Nothing I could say or do disturbed the stolidness so characteristic of some tribes. They maintained a reserve that I could not break down.

After the scholars were dismissed, the missionary tried to revive my drooping spirits by assuring me that they would laugh when they got far enough away to be undiscovered in the act. He reminded me that self-control was one of their characteristics. Under all circumstances they could remain with faces as expressionless as that of a clock. Even under intense torture no indication of suffering will be manifested. The same is true in regard to joyous experiences. A man may be proud of some achievement of his child but on no account will he permit his face to indicate that pride.

"However," he added reminiscently, "I once saw a few of them really smile in one of my Sunday Services. It was about two years after my appointment as Missionary to this Reserve. I had done pretty well in acquiring the language and conversed in it without any difficulty. Preaching, however, presented more problems than conversation because some of the great doctrinal words are very hard to translate, there being no equivalents for them in the Indian's vocabulary. Then, too, an occasional word not previously used would cause

me a little trouble. Fortunately there was an unusually intelligent young brave on the Reserve and he often helped me with translation.

"I was at work on my sermon one week-end and had taken a rather unusual text for such a congregation. 'Can the leopard change his spots?' The word 'spots' I could not remember using in Indian. I solicited the help of my interpreter friend. 'Spots!' He shook his head. I spoke of a dog having black or white spots on him. He still shook his head. Fortunately, or unfortunately, I had been painting a new window-sash that morning and had splashed paint on my clothing. I repeated the word 'spots' and pointed to some paint on my trousers. His eyes brightened and he at once gave me the word. I thought it similar to another word I had used but unfortunately did not say so. I repeated it two or three times to his satisfaction and then wrote it phonetically on a slip of paper.

"During my 'leopard' sermon I noticed a slight restlessness that was unusual. I had occasion to repeat the text several times and more than once I saw what I had never seen before in church, a face here and there on which was a smile. This was so out of the ordinary that at the close I asked my interpreter if anything was wrong. He informed me that the Indians were greatly amused that I should have asked so often 'Can the leopard change his trousers?'"

"Your story to the children reminded me of rather a good one told at the expense of Bishop T—. He is unusually interesting at children's gatherings. They say that a little girl who always lost interest when any preacher began to apply the moral of his story, was greatly taken with the Bishop's address. 'Mamma,' she said as they turned homewards, 'I like that Bishop

better than any preacher we've ever had because he hasn't got any morals.'"

The teachers had various experiences to relate, illustrating the habits and characteristics of the prairie Indian. "Toward the end of my first year at the Mission," said one, "one of our older girls lay dying with tubercular trouble. She had been taken to her home and lay on the ground in a tent that was pitched near her father's house. When Indians are sick, almost the first thing they desire is to lie on the floor or ground. I visited the poor girl often, that I might talk and read with her. As the end drew near, she wanted me most of the time. All the time I could spare from my school duties, I was there. She passed away one Sabbath Day while I was conducting the Mission Sunday School. As soon as the lesson was finished, I hurried over the prairie to find that she had just passed on. Her mother, a Christian and a member of the church, asked me to prepare the body for burial. I had never done such a thing, but said I would, if one of the Indian women present would help me. We were at our sad task when the mother came and gave me the girl's Bible. Not understanding their customs at that time I thought she wished me to read a passage aloud, so I took the Bible and laid it aside, saying that I would do so when we had finished.

"She went out of the tent, but soon returned. Picking up the Bible she handed it to me as before. Again I laid it aside and said we were not finished. For the third time she did the same thing and when I put it down again, she threw herself on her knees and burying her face in her hands, she bowed to the ground and began the weird and almost blood-chilling moaning of the grief-stricken Indian. One of the women who spoke some English explained the reason of it all. The mother

wished me to accept the Bible as a gift. This I could not understand either, for I was comparing her with a white mother, who would dearly prize her departed daughter's Bible. So thinking she wished to reward me for the work I had done, I said that I could not think of taking so great a prize and for her to keep it, and that I would come and read it to her whenever I could. This only made matters worse and when I went back to the school, the poor mother was still on the ground wailing.

"When I told one of the older members of the staff about it, she explained that when an Indian adult or child dies, the friends give away all their belongings. It enables them to forget as soon as possible. If the belongings were retained, they would bring the deceased to mind. After death it is a very, very rare occurrence to hear either the Christian or surname of a departed Indian, he or she is nearly always referred to (if at all) as that woman, that man, that little girl or that little boy."

"One Sunday evening in the winter an Indian called at the Mission to say that Mrs. F---'s baby was dying and that she wanted one of the 'moniawquay' (white women) to go over. It was a one-roomed house and when we entered, we saw the mother sitting on the floor with her baby in her lap, and several women squatting near her. A number of men were smoking around the fireplace. The mother kissed the baby and handed it to the lady missionary and then went over to the other side of the room and sat disconsolately on the floor.

"The baby had been taking convulsions for several days and everything that they or we knew of had been tried, but to no avail. The wee tot was done up tightly in a moss bag and was just out of one convulsion and

into another. When we looked at it, we knew it was just a matter of a short time before the poor little thing would be at rest, so taking the mother's place on the floor, the moss-bag was untied and the baby taken out and made as comfortable as possible in the visitor's arms. It was not until midnight that the little sufferer passed away. Only once during the five hours did the stricken mother come near the little group on the floor. She took the child for a few seconds and quietly sobbing, kissed it and handed it back to me, looking into my face with such a piteous appeal in her dark eyes that I was deeply grieved at our helplessness to bring relief.

"When she was told by one of the women that the baby had gone, she brought a basin of water and a large cake of laundry soap and asked that the little body be washed and dressed in the clothes that a friend had gone back to procure from the Mission House. One of the Indian women moved around the room gathering up the different articles belonging to the baby. These she tied in a bundle and took away so that the mother would not see them again."

"But there are the humorous as well as the pathetic experiences," began the Superintendent. "We've a good joke on Miss Spokes—she's our Junior girls teacher. We say she's ninety-six pounds of combined vivacity, good sense and Christian kindness.

"One Saturday morning a crippled Indian rode into the Mission and asked for Miss Spokes. We were all greatly surprised to see him riding, for he had not been known to mount a horse for several years. We knew it must be something serious for him to risk the journey. Without dismounting, he gave his message; his wife was dying and wished to see Miss Spokes before the

end came. He turned his pony's head and started for home. As soon as possible the boys hooked up a horse to the buggy and Miss Spokes started after the messenger. She wondered what the woman's desire could be, and was thinking of how best to bring an appropriate word. She found the woman in bed but not looking particularly sick. Miss Spokes was assured, however, that the Indian woman was dying and that if she would adopt her little boy she could die happy. But the teacher told her plainly that she did not think she was going to die. She continued to insist that she was dying, and implored her to adopt her young son. Again she was assured that she was not near death, and that in any case Miss Spokes was not in a position to adopt a child. After more urgent pleading the mother was promised that in case of death, the Church would look after her child. This did not altogether satisfy her, but she saw she could do no more. In a day or two the woman was performing her duties as usual.

"The woman is still living and so is her son Samuel, now a man of twenty-five or twenty-six. It is over twenty years since the 'dying request' was made. Miss Spokes married a local rancher and the members of the staff who know her still jokingly refer to two-hundred-pound Samuel as her 'almost adopted boy'. It turned out that what really started the Indian woman on the adoption business was the fact that several of the staff at a nearby Industrial School had each adopted an Indian child, generally orphans, and so Mrs. McKoop thought she might just as well dispose of her boy, especially as it would give her more liberty to get away on hunting expeditions. She had therefore devised 'dying' as the most plausible way out of the difficulty."

As we tramped across the prairie, the two teachers

accompanying me spoke of how disappointing the work among the Prairie Indians had been, and even when some of the young folks had graduated and gave every promise of having broken definitely with the old life, it was often only a week or two after their departure from the school that they were back to paint and feathers; to sun-dance and other festivities and wild orgies. Yet they felt Christian education must continue and hoped that after a generation or two the Gospel might work the desired transformation.

"However," one of them added, "we are taking you to an Indian home for the night, that you may see some results of such work as ours. The husband and wife are both graduates of the church school, and although they are very shy and will say little unless you draw it out of them, they will feel they have been honoured by being asked to entertain you. Their old heathen name was Kinzadak, but they have taken the English name Johnson. One of the hardest things for the Indian to give up is the paint and feathers. These trappings have a strange tribal fascination akin to the national love the Scot has for the kilt and bagpipes, although with vastly different results.

"The Johnsons have never yielded to the temptation to return to the old life, although for a long time they had to endure many taunts and much ridicule. Mr. Johnson's parents still prefer the wigwam, and are sullen and sour at the way their son is living. Indeed, they have cast him off because he has become a Christian. But that is the attitude of many of the old folks. They resent Christianity because it means foregoing most of their dances and all the orgies that have become such an exhilarating part of their wild life. Indeed, in the earliest days of Christianity among them, not a few of

the 'praying Indians' as they were termed, suffered terrible tortures at the hands of chiefs, and at the pow-wows."

Later in the day we called to see the old father and his squaw. They were squatting outside the teepee, and we soon learned from our own observation how degraded and superstitious they were. The old man gave the very expressive Indian grunt but manifested no sign of cordiality over the visit of the white folk. The wizened old mother was busy with her cosmetics. Noticing the stranger's curiosity she pushed what seemed to be a solution made from berries and a pitchy-looking paste under her dirty blanket. Adjusting the gaudy-looking silken scarf which constituted her head covering, she gazed stupidly at the visitors while the old chief talked. Once or twice she added to the chew in her tobacco-smeared mouth. Throughout the Reserve most of the chiefs and squaws were dirty, indolent and unambitious.

The old man shook his head disapprovingly when Christianity was mentioned. "Ugh! No! No! White man bring us sickness. Not good. White man take what Indian owns. White man make our children give up ways of our fathers—not good. White man bring fire-water—make Indian much bad man. Indian like own ways, not white man ways. Too late old chief to change. Him not want white man religion."

He listened somewhat impatiently as the missionary talked quietly and kindly, and yet there was an evident visualizing of a God Who was the Great Chief or the Great Spirit, and a belief that somewhere beyond the sun were the happy hunting grounds, but he resented so much all the wrongs that he thought the white man had inflicted upon the Indian that he wanted nothing to

do with the white man's religion. His superstition was quickly aroused when anything went wrong and the blame was laid on the white man.

The younger Indians we found quite different and many of them were undoubtedly true followers of Jesus Christ. Late in the evening we heard the strains of "I am so glad" coming from the school-house. A number of girls were singing hymns they had learned in the little Mission Church.

That evening our host said of the missionary who superintended the school, "He is a Jesus man—good man, sure." As we sat down to supper, he said quietly, "You tell God thank you, please." We were told by others that this young Indian's life and conduct demonstrated the sincerity of his faith. His black-haired, dark-skinned girl-wife served a meal that was quite as good as in the average home of the ordinary working white man. The linen was spotlessly clean. When her coarse but well-made bread was praised, she was evidently as pleased to get the appreciative word as are most of her sex.

As she and her husband conducted the visitor to his room, she manifested a good deal of timidity. "I am afraid it not so nice as you should have." The visitor saw it was clean and once more congratulated her on her housekeeping ability. "I feel so glad if you think it is good." Then she added in a nervous whisper, "we never have a white minister stay with us before." Then with a smile, "and I was all afraid to have you come, but I am not so much afraid now."

As the darkness increased, they became more communicative and admitted that most of the work on the house had been done between them, but they gave credit to the school for the knowledge they possessed.

We sang "Jesus Loves Me" ere we knelt in prayer. Perhaps it was not a musical success, but the visitor's heart was strangely stirred as in that little Indian home on the broad prairie, he united his voice with these descendants of wild tribes whose weird, wild dances and whiskey-feasts were in strange contrast to these quiet moments of worship. "Yes!" said my host, "my father and all those I knew when I was in the tepee would take part in the drinking and dancing and it was horrible. Oh, it was horrible! The whiskey makes all men bad, but it makes the Indian bad as anything you can think of. It makes him what you call a fiend, it makes him very cruel, he will murder anybody. He will stop at nothing when he has had whiskey; it makes him do everything there is that is bad. But my father and the others who sometimes drink will curse the whiskey even after they have gone far and worked hard to get it."

We knew how incredibly vicious the Indian became when intoxicated, and how complete could be his downfall. We knew, too, that some old Indians had said that it was better to be at war with the white man than to have his friendship, because his friendship meant "fire-water" and fire-water killed many of the best of the tribe.

From one generation that bitterly opposed all missionary effort, we had come to another that could sing reverently "Jesus Loves Me". After the recital of the vices of former days, it was a moving experience to see this young Indian couple clasping hands and saying "Our Father". In a quietly whimsical way the husband said: "It was hard for me to learn to pray in English, but I thought maybe God wouldn't understand Indian language: they say it's too hard for Canadians and I wasn't sure if God knew it."

With a thankful heart we lay down to rest in the room built and prepared by hands that, but for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, might have slashed the throat of the one they now counted it an honour to entertain.

In the morning the kindly little Indian wife said a beautiful and encouraging word. Would to God it might be true of all of us who profess His name. "Good-bye, please come again. We think Jesus makes people so nice."

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I am indebted to the late Canon G. O. Troop for the following interpretation of the twenty-third Psalm, as rendered in the sign language by a godly old Red Indian. It is interesting and suggestive to recall the King James version verse by verse as the Indian's version is read—

"The great Father above is a Shepherd Chief, I am His and with Him I want not.

He throws out to me a rope and the name of the rope is love, and He draws me to where the grass is green and the water is not dangerous, and I eat and lie down satisfied.

Sometimes my heart is very weak, and falls down, but He lifts it up again and draws me into a good road. His name is Wonderful. Sometime, it may be very soon, it may be longer, it may be a long long time, He will draw me into a place between mountains. It is dark there, but I will draw back not: I will be afraid not, for it is in there between those mountains that the Shepherd Chief will meet me, and the hunger I have felt in my heart all through this life will be satisfied.

Sometimes He makes the love-rope into a whip but afterward He gives me a staff to lean on. He spreads a table before me with all kinds of food. He puts His hands upon my head and all the tired is gone. My cup He fills till it runs over. What I tell you is true: I lie not. These roads that are away ahead will stay with me through this life and afterward I will go to live in the big tepee and will sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever."

## CHAPTER VI.

## The Privilege of Sharing Privation

**F**OR twenty-three years Arthur Minter had labored far from the highways of travel, where only the most devoted would have gone or remained.

The writer visited the Minters on three occasions during the last eight years of their missionary activities —twice for week-end services and once for a twenty-day preaching mission. Their dwelling was a little un-painted frame house—two rooms downstairs—a sitting room in which was the bed, and a dining room in which was the kitchen stove. The upstairs was unfinished and was reached by crude steps at the top of which was a trapdoor. When a visitor came, the Minters managed to fix their sleeping quarters in this un-plastered and only partially floored attic. A patch on the sitting room ceiling was a reminder of the night when the missionary stepped off the flooring and put his foot through the laths, bringing plaster and nervous prostration to the visitor engaged in her devotions below. "That was one of the times my husband put his foot in it badly," said Mrs. Minter. Besides the bed, the sitting room contained two chairs, a small table made out of a dry-goods box covered with cretonne, an old country harmonium and an ancient ochre-coloured tin trunk. Over the head of the bed was a shelf of books that had become well-worn by being handled and re-handled in search for sermonic material. Two Bibles and two volumes of Matthew Henry's Commentaries were by far the most dilapidated of all. Their condition explained much of the conversation of that home and much of the phraseology of Arthur Minter's prayers. Twice a day, pre-

ceding their frugal meals, the voices of the Minters were united in some psalm or song of praise. Their possessions seemed very few, but "O Come, let us sing to the Lord", "Let us with a gladsome mind", and "Count your blessings" seemed to be their favorite selections, and expressed their gratitude to the One whose leading and care they never doubted. Arthur and Jessie Minter knew how to magnify their blessings and minimize their privations. They reminded the visitor of the little girl who, with her brother, was kept in the house one cloudy day.

"Oh, look, Robbie!" Bertha cried, "the sun's come out; isn't it lovely?" "I don't call that much sunshine," answered Robbie, with a disapproving glance at the sky, "there are a whole lot of clouds yet." Bertha looked at the golden patch on the floor where a struggling sunbeam had found its way through the window, and for a moment she scarcely knew what to say. Then her eyes lit up as she exclaimed, "Well, anyway, Robbie, it's a good deal of sunshine if you sit in it." The Minters always found the sunshiny spots in life's experiences.

On a few wire nails under a white sheet the household wardrobe hung. Arthur Minter and his wife had few worries about what to wear. It was only a question of whether to keep on what they had or to change into "the other one". His faded "Prince Albert" had seen ten years of constant service. His faithful helpmeet had re-made or re-fashioned her best dress season after season.

Perhaps things might have been different with them —certainly they should have been, for such laborers are worthy of their hire. The "field" was expected to raise a definite amount each year toward salary and

the missionary was supposed, according to the conserver's instructions, to "keep at them". The Minters knew that most of the people were poor, and so they took the instalments of a meagre salary handed to them by the treasurer, and no word of complaint ever passed their lips. The treasurer kept track of the offerings on the backs of old envelopes which he placed behind his eight-day clock, and about once a month Mr. Minter received such coppers and nickels as had been contributed.

For several years, Sabbath by Sabbath, Arthur Minter covered nearly thirty miles of rarely travelled roads that always meant discomfort and often meant danger. On those ungraded roads the writer has frequently seen the buggy wheels sink to the hub. The mud would cling so tenaciously that sometimes not a spoke would be visible—just a round mass of adhesive mud. At certain seasons wash-outs would make ditches from two to ten feet across the roadway. Then there were boulders that could not be avoided. The jerking and bumping and swaying of the rig over such roads would, as Mrs. Minter said, "frazzle the nerves" of any man. Many a time Arthur Minter had been compelled to walk over twenty miles on Sunday, and with weary, mud-laden feet would enter the little school-house for the closing service of the day, supperless but cheerful. Few of those waiting for the preacher to begin the delayed service, realized the physical strain of those long, hard tramps over roads impassable for a horse and vehicle. But the zealous missionary did it without a murmur, and the joy of his Master's work caused him to pay little attention to bodily discomforts.

Then there were the terrible winter days with their bitter blasts and drifting snows and blinding storms. For weeks at a time the missionary's would be the only

vehicle of any kind that made the thirteen-mile section of the journey across the plains to "The Valley", and as storms often occurred two or three times a week, it meant breaking the road every Sunday.

Usually, to have the best possible start for his Sabbath day's work, he drove to the far end of his field on Saturday, occupying a roughly constructed bed with two or more children of the family. An early breakfast, and then he was away on his drive of three or four miles to a log school-house for a nine o'clock meeting with two or three adults and a dozen children. In the winter time he usually had to light the fire when he arrived, and frequently the place could not be made comfortable until the service was almost over, and only then by keeping the stove constantly replenished.

About an hour later he was on his five-mile journey to a service in a building known as the Town Hall. There was no town within fifty miles and "barn" would have been a more appropriate name than "hall". A Roman Catholic neighbour had acted as caretaker ever since Mr. and Mrs. Minter had helped to nurse his daughter through a serious illness. It was the only place on a wintry day that Mr. Minter knew would be fairly comfortable. Eight to fifteen people would ordinarily comprise his audience, and if twenty happened to be present, the report would be "a fine crowd", while thirty would be "an inspiring sight".

A few minutes for lunch at a nearby house and the missionary was off on a thirteen-mile drive over rarely-travelled ways for a service at three-thirty. Often there were snowdrifts that would have justified him in giving up all thought of keeping his appointment, but he never flinched. Not infrequently he would tramp ahead of his old and faithful horse in order to make it a bit easier

for her. More than once he was compelled to leave his cutter out on the plains or in the bush while he tramped ahead of Jess to his next appointment, for no sleigh could have been dragged through the drifts.

His last preaching station involved a long drive that for several months of the year had to be done after sunset; following three services with twenty-two miles of Algoma's winter roads it constituted, as one visitor said, "an inhuman day's work". Often there was no time to eat and with teeth chattering from the cold, he would put Jess into the stable and hurry over to the Moss Creek Church for his closing service.

During the Sabbath Day, for five months in the year, his faithful partner had taught little groups of children in three different homes of the wide district over which they had charge. So it had been for years and never had Arthur Minter and his wife shirked their jobs.

It was at the close of a February Sunday when the visitor had carried out the regular programme, that he and the Minters huddled around the stove in the missionary's humble dwelling. John MacLean from "the Corners" had told them at the church that his thermometer was twenty-eight below and that it would "hit forty before morning". One cannot forget that night when Christian sympathy, the quiet of the surroundings and the dimly lighted room combined to make each one confidential. What a recital of privations and disappointments and losses and unforeseen expenditures and blasted hopes it was! It was the only occasion on which anything like a complaint had escaped their lips, and the visitor felt it was amply justified. He was cautioned never to tell much that they told him "but we just like to tell you everything". There was a pathetic resentment almost amounting to bitterness as Mrs. Minter,

with loving concern for her "good man", told how, after all he had done through the long years, he was still unable to get ordination.

It was the heart-break of their later life that the Committee on Education "could not see its way clear to grant Mr. Minter ordination". The members of the Committee feared it might "establish a precedent". "Don't you think," asked Mrs. Minter that night, "that when he gave up everything to come out here and has taken the very hardest fields for twenty years, they might remove the handicap of his being unordained?" Arthur Minter had no greater ambition than to serve in pioneer districts but he felt the embarrassment of being unable to perform the ceremonies of Baptism and Marriage. Frequently people would tediously travel long distances expecting him to render such service, only to find that his fellow ministers were unwilling or unable to grant him that privilege. Both were exceedingly sensitive about trying to explain why he could not so officiate and felt a sense akin to shame. Just where he will stand on the ultimate Roll of Honour, the writer knows not, but in a land where degrees and ordination have no necessary value, he will have his place and his reward.

Over twenty years of frequent and close contact with the church's representatives in the newer districts have revealed to the writer how mightily the Dominion is enriched by such lives and labors as those of Arthur and Jessie Minter—true pioneers blazing Gospel trails and lighting lamps that shall make the future highways safer and brighter for those who are to follow. They had given up business and home among the heather-clad hills of Scotland and had crossed the ocean after a year's preparation in one of their own Bible Colleges.

It was a stirring appeal of that prince of Home Mission Superintendents, Dr. James Robertson, that had caused them to leave "home and all for His dear sake".

Ere retiring that bitterly cold February night, Mrs. Minter opened an old tin trunk and taking out a faded plush box handed it to the visitor. "It isn't much," she said quietly, "but I'd like you to take it back to Toronto and sell it and give the money to the Home Mission Fund. It's the only bit of jewelry I've got and woman-like I did not want to part with it, but I really don't need it and we haven't anything else to give." The box contained an old English bracelet, solid gold, with an exquisitely carved ivy design. It had been passed down through two generations and was a reminder of days when the Mackenzie family had been in different circumstances. Earnest protest was made against receiving the gift, even with tears, for no man could be other than moved by it, but the decision would not be reversed, and their wishes were carried out.

One may hope that something of the spirit of sacrifice and helpfulness may pass to the new owner of Jessie Minter's last ornamental treasure.

The visitor to the unpainted manse in that isolated and lonely settlement has been entertained in many charmingly elegant guest-rooms during his Dominion-wide ministry, and, had he the photographs of some of these to compare with the snap-shot he has of the Minters' "all-purpose" guest room, the latter would appear very unattractive and bare. But there are certain elements that contribute to a guest's happiness and even to his comfort, that are not necessarily included in beautiful furniture and costly upholsteries and approved colour schemes. The Minters' whole-souled hospitality and unaffected welcome and homely simplicity somehow

lifted their scanty furnishings to a higher level and wrought a state of gratitude in the heart of the recipient that beautified what otherwise might have seemed very commonplace. Their guest knew also that in the still barer loft above these two self-sacrificing pioneers had lain down to rest with glad hearts that they had been permitted to entertain an Ambassador of that King Whom they had crowned Lord of all in their own lives.

Their names were unknown beyond the districts in which they laboured, but many a lonely, burdened soul learned much of the Friend of the lonely and of the great Burden-bearer through the words and lives of these two toilers in the Lord's vineyard. "No one," says Dickens, "is useless in the world who lightens the burden of it for anyone else." The Minters' little home was ever open to all who had need, and not a few were led to the Saviour in that lowly dwelling. No church paper ever contained their names, but in the Lamb's Book of Life the Minters assuredly have a place.

## CHAPTER VII.

## Hospitality Among the Cree Indians

**N**EARLY all the Indians in the territory of which this is written live in the tepee, or "Mar tar gwan", as it is called in their language. In summer it is rough and crudely fashioned. The preliminary operation consists of three poles erected in tripod form, fastened together by moosehide or willows a foot or so from the top. When these three poles are properly placed, others are added to the tripod until there is a sufficient number to cover the space required for the family. By placing these supports not more than three feet apart at the ground, the canvass or covering is adequately fortified against wind and storm. Where canvass is not available, the frame-work is covered with birch bark, old shawls, ragged blankets, bits of broken canoes or any other material that may help keep out the rain.

An open space is left at the top for a smoke-escape from the campfire. This smoke-vent is regulated according to wind and weather conditions. From time to time similar adjustments have to be made at the tent entrance. This is often a bit confusing to the missionary. One day the door will be to the east and the next time to the west. Dogs are always numerous in such encampments, and the stranger's effort to locate the elusive entrance brings the suspicious brutes skulking and growling about his heels. More than one missionary has had his trousers torn by the teeth of protesting dogs. Usually the tent door consists of a loose flap attached to a short stick similar to a boom on a sail. Its weight and position holds the flap in place.

As there is no way of knocking or ringing, it is considered proper for the stranger to give warning of his visit by simply raising the flap very slowly. He is expected to pause a moment or two before entering. Great care must be exercised in stepping inside. In strange confusion around the fire are pots and pans and articles of food. The feet and legs, or backs, of the tent occupants, seem to cover all other space. If the tepee contains a seat, it is generally offered to the visitor, but often the ground is the only seating accommodation available. If there be a seat, it is a small box about a foot square and is usually the only piece of furniture possessed. One soon becomes accustomed to squatting on the carpet of pine boughs which is renewed every few days.

A well-to-do hunter or trapper often has a duck tent attached to the tepee, and if he has several married sons or daughters living with him, additional tents may be added. One fire in the centre of the main tent serves all. In the dome of the tepee are constructed racks made of light poles on which fish and meat are piled. The constantly arising smoke acts as the preservative.

If the missionary is staying some length of time, he generally and gladly attends to his own cooking, but he must be prepared when invitation is given or necessity arises, to eat that which is set before him. The meal will then consist of boiled fish with the liquor to drink, boiled rabbit, partridge, or other flesh or fowl secured by line, snare or gun. The most common method of cooking is by roasting or toasting on spits.

The Indian bread, or Bannock, is made before the fire in a "fry-pan". The method of cooking is unsatisfactory as the bread is usually raw in the middle and over-done on each side. Bannock to eat and tea to

drink is always considered a great treat, and can only be expected when the inmates are in the best of circumstances. These two items are such luxuries that nothing further would be served at the same meal.

As night draws on, the children fall asleep where they are reclining and wherever they fall is their bed for the night. A rabbit-skin robe is thrown over them, and so far as putting them to bed is concerned, no further attention is required or given. When it is deemed time for the older folks to retire, they stir up the fire so as to make it burn brightly enough for the missionary to conduct family worship. At the same time some fine tooth combs, usually kept in the prayer book, are brought into action. It is a very solemn performance and appears to them to be quite appropriate at prayer time. Each male member carefully combs his hair and destroys any troublesome lice encountered during the process. This done, the missionary, sometimes assisted by the head of the household, leads in singing, reading and praying. After prayers all "arrange themselves" for the night, lying on the pine boughs with feet towards the fire. Occasionally conditions are such that it is unsafe to leave any portion of hands or head uncovered. There is real danger of being frozen to death.

In the winter time the families scatter far and wide to their respective trapping grounds, and the only means of reaching them is over the bush trails and frozen lakes and rivers by snowshoe and dog-train.

Here is the gist of a missionary's diary memo for a day at the beginning of the year. "It was bleak and cold for our long journey over the snow. One of the party was smitten with snow-blindness. By 4.00 p.m. the sun was sinking behind the pine-tops on the horizon. Dogs and men were 'dead tired' from their day's 'mushing',

and all wanted to get to a place where there was shelter, for we feared a blizzard was impending, and to be lost in a blizzard is one of the most fearful experiences that life brings. With darkness approaching, the pace always increases. Even the dogs seem to know, either by scent or some other instinct, that round the next bend of the river, or over the next little lake or portage, there is an Indian camp. Every dog strained frantically at his traces, making the old toboggan fairly leap over the snow so that the Indian, One-Eye Eagle, running in front, had all he could do to keep ahead of the dogs.

"At last we reached a tepee and our huskies began the usual fight with the dogs of the encampment. After the respective owners of the warring canines got them quieted down, the toboggan harness was taken off. The dogs were chained up and an armful of pine brush scattered around them for bedding. The lashings were then removed from the sled, and the load, comprising bedding, grub-box, and frozen fish for dogs' food, was carried into the tepee. Had no dog-fish been in the pack, it would have been necessary to barter for some. When the Indians have a scarcity, they will hide it away and assure you they have none. But experience often enables the visitor to locate it, and out of pity for the hard-worked dogs, a trade is insisted on, as the Indians can get more fish with a little effort."

The tepees used in winter are constructed in the same way as those occupied during the summer, except that the poles are placed much closer together and the frame covered with a layer of moss five or ten inches thick, which is brought from the bush in shawls and blankets by the women and girls. When this is covered with a foot or two of snow, it keeps out quite a lot of frost, although one's back gets terribly cold when sit-

ting up. Generally a low log porch is built at the entrance of a winter tepee.

Entering the tepee we find the women and children clad in rabbit-skin coats sitting before a roaring fire. One's clothes may be scorching in front while at the back they may actually be frozen stiff. Not infrequently meat has repeatedly to be thawed out during the meal, and the freezing of the tea in tins or cups often occurs even though it was poured out boiling hot a few minutes before. The temperature is frequently forty below zero outside. A satisfactorily heated tepee is impossible at such times. Yet in spite of the discomfort of being roasted and frozen simultaneously and certain other little inconveniences, one is very glad to enjoy such hospitality, for it is vastly more comfortable than pitching one's own tent. In that wild, bleak wilderness of snow and ice, there is nothing better than the tepee and its blazing fire.

The first thing one does on getting inside is to arrange the dog fish around the fire so as to thaw it sufficiently for the dogs to get their teeth into it. Clothing, which has become damp with perspiration and snow, must be changed. The Indian, after removing his outer garments, such as his parka, overalls, mitts, cap, moccasins and socks, usually dries his remaining clothes by standing before the fire and frequently turning around. Only the intense cold outside prevents one unused to this procedure from escaping the horrible odors that result.

When starting on a journey that is likely to last one or two weeks, the missionary's grub-box would contain eight or nine tins of corned beef or Irish stew; six or seven pounds of bacon, rolled oats, lard, a tin of butter, flour, baking powder, salt, tea, and possibly some bread.

The most important item is tea. Not only is this the universal beverage of the North, but it is also the chief article of trade. If one has a good supply of tea, he can often trade it for meat or fish, either fresh or smoked. Money would be practically valueless and is never carried. It is of no use where every exchange or trade is based on immediate physical needs, and where stores are many miles away.

The missionary's travelling utensils consist of frying pan, kettle (usually an empty lard pail), enamel cup, plate, knife, fork and spoon. Supper is always the chief meal of the day. Indians and travellers in these regions have then ample time for preparing, eating, and digesting the food before striking the trail in the early morning. When supper-time comes, the bannock-flour is mixed with water, baking powder and fat. After kneading it in the frying pan, it is tilted towards the fire to bake. Tea is made in the kettle. The grub-box serves as a table and a flour bag as table-cloth. When everything is ready, the other occupants gather in little groups round the respective family plates. The missionary gives thanks and all "fall to". The fish or meat is taken from the kettle with a home-made wooden ladle. In some of the better and well-organized families, each adult has his own tin plate. More often, however, one or two plates do duty for all present. The mug is also used by all, and the Indian argues that fingers are much handier than forks or spoons, so why bother with cutlery? His method of living and the rigorous climate give him a most amazing appetite. At the evening meal one individual will easily dispose of two or three rabbits and a brace of ptarmigan. Three or four good-sized white fish would not be considered too much for one man's meal.

After the meal, the cups and plates are wiped off with a handful of fresh moss and tucked away behind the bundles of bedding near the tepee poles. The missionary is a little more particular and washes his dishes with melted snow, using the table cloth for a dish towel. The evening is spent getting moccasins and snowshoes in shape for the next day's use, or in doctoring aching limbs. A very common ailment, when making long snowshoe trips, is "the snowshoe sickness", a most distressing pain in the muscles extending from the top of the foot well up to the knee. The best remedy for this is an axe handle heated before the fire and pressed up and down the shin. If suffering from blistered feet due to the friction of the snowshoe, a good cure is the skin of a rabbit put on the foot immediately after its removal from the warm animal and allowed to remain on until the end of the journey.

The difficulties and inconveniences of such trips are not conducive to the preparation of Biblical messages. But in nearly every encampment there are sick ones needing physical attention, and also the spiritual cheer that only the Word of God can furnish. If other tepees are near enough, a messenger is sent to tell the occupants that the missionary has arrived and very soon a procession is slowly moving into his host's tent, until every available space is occupied. All join heartily in the hymn singing, but as soon as prayers begin, the ceremony of the fine tooth comb commences. This seems to be a special custom of Northern Indians.

When the service is over a little time is spent in story telling and exchanging news. But there is not much temptation to keep late hours, and as the big fire tends to drowsiness, the visitors soon depart and the rest settle down for the night. The missionary carries

his own rabbit-robe or eiderdown which constitutes the whole of his bed and bedding; very soon the teepee is full of sleeping rabbit-robed or blanketed figures with bare feet stretched towards the fire. Yet the nights are not as peaceful in these lonely encampments as one might imagine. The Indian babies have good lungs and do not hesitate to use them when needing attention. Then the fire must be replenished from time to time, which is often a noisy procedure.

Should the firemen be neglectful, the cold becomes intense and the visitor cannot sleep for the anxious thoughts about death through freezing, and yet he is too cold to move and do the firing himself. In the early morning hours someone makes an extra large blaze and puts on the tea-kettle. Apparently the rest of the circle is sleeping, but possibly they watch the procedure through half-closed eyes, for no sooner is the tea ready than everyone seems to be wide awake, and there is a scramble to put on socks and moccasins. The guest of honor is handed a tiny wash basin about the size of a porridge bowl. It contains little more than a cupful of warm water for washing face and hands. When the missionary is finished, the basin, with no change of water, is passed on to the others until it has gone the round of the whole family. The missionary is ever profoundly thankful that custom has decreed that the visitor comes first. A traveller who knows life in the tepee will always carry his own towel.

The parson's shave is really an event in camp and the news is quickly passed around when the operation commences. The adults are so interested that all tasks cease in order that everyone may watch the process. To the children it is highly amusing. The reason for the unusual interest is that nature seems to have been par-

ticularly kind to the Indian in saving him the daily task of shaving. A razor is very seldom necessary. Many have never seen one used in forty or more years of life, hence the interest aroused.

Immediately after breakfast and prayers, if there be sufficient daylight to see the trail, sleds are loaded and dogs harnessed. There is a shaking of hands all round and a multitude of "good lucks" are called out as the trail is hit once more.

As the day wears on in such an encampment, the men go out to their trap-lines and the women visit their snares in the bush. Then the nets that are set under the ice need attention. The women and children bring up the wood, sometimes on their backs and sometimes on small wooden sleds with iced runners and drawn by a few scraggy dogs. Later in the day they may be seen preparing moose and deer hides by scraping off the hair with a sharp axe and removing the fat and sinew with a scraper made out of a bone. These hides are repeatedly wetted and pulled and worked by hand before the fire until they are dry, and then the smoking process follows. Rabbit-skins are slit into strips and woven into robes and coats and bonnets for the women and children. Pelts of the different animals trapped or shot have to be put on stretchers. Then the fires need constant attention and there must be the daily baking of bread. House-keeping means practically nothing but plain food and getting something to cover the body, but the people are fond of showy clothing and in their spare time the women do fancy bead and silk work to put on the men's mitts and moccasins. Woman's life is still a hard one, and although less arduous than a century ago, it is still little better than slavery.

Living with the Indians one cannot but be impressed

with their narrow outlook on life. The majority of them know absolutely nothing of what is going on in the outside world. The securing of food and clothing from day to day, week in and week out for themselves and their families is their one all-absorbing interest in life. But they often express their consciousness of the brevity and uncertainty of life, and speak of the Great Spirit and of the happy hunting grounds or desirable land to which they are hastening. Some of them speak of the Great Spirit as The Man Above and ordinarily this is a very different conception from the idea of the God worshipped by the white man.

To a casual observer the simple life of these people is often taken to be the expression of contentment, but they are not without their unsatisfied longings. In the heart of many, though poorly expressed, there is a yearning for fellowship with the "Great Spirit".

## CHAPTER VIII.

## The Ghost of Alec Rollins

**H**AVING been brought up among superstitious villagers in the heart of the "tight little island" I had been familiar with ghost stories from my early boyhood days. Yet I never felt I had them from reliable enough sources to put them into the realm of certainty, until I heard the personal experiences of the Rev. Forbes Gordon. Forbes Gordon is a name that stands for absolute reliability throughout the whole province in which he lives.

We had been associated in anniversary services and had driven several miles along the Matapac River after the Monday night programme. The night was cool, and when we reached the Manse, Mrs. Gordon had the logs blazing in the open fireplace. A few minutes later cocoa and toast were added to the attractiveness of the day's declining hours. The lights were turned off and we sat in the glow of the firelight, tired but comfortable.

As the firelight grew dimmer the conversation turned to some of the weird and "creepy" experiences that had come into each of our lives.

As Forbes Gordon prepared to narrate his experience with a real ghost, his wife protested that it was "no time to tell that horrible story", and that their guest should depart to his room with something less sleep-disturbing in his mind. The curiosity of the guest, however, had been aroused, and though Mrs. Gordon refused to remain for the "horrible story", her husband told it as is hereafter written.

"Nearly five years ago," he began, "we were living

in a country manse off the north shore of Trout Lake. I had three preaching stations, and in two of them I held week-night services. My congregations were composed mainly of farmers and fishermen, both classes doing more or less lumbering during the winter. Many of them found it hard work to make a living, and conditions some seasons were very bad. Farm after farm was deserted, the tenants or owners usually getting work in towns or taking up land in the Far West.

"We had no police supervision and the minister and the reeve of the township were usually called upon whenever any startling event disturbed our otherwise exceedingly quiet community. One morning as I was preparing to go to the west end of my field for a day's visiting, a farmer drove up to tell me I was wanted immediately at a farm almost seven miles over the hills in an opposite direction.

"I knew something unusual had happened, for his face was pale and his hands and voice were trembling. 'It's old Alec Rollins,' he said, 'He's been—out—o' sorts—for quite a spell—and since his sister died—he's bin all alone on his place—and wus acting kind o' queer the last time I seed him.' His voice kept choking with emotion, and it took him a long time to finish his story. 'This morning I kind 'a took a notion—I'd see how the old chap was making things go—so I drove up there. The barn door was shut and I thought the place was kind 'a quiet—and there wa'n't—no sign of him around, so I opened the back door of the house and called three or four times... On account of him acting queer-like, I wa'n't keen on goin' in, but after a bit I went into every room, and he wa'n't there. I thought maybe he'd druv off somewhere—but just to be sure I went to the barn—and slid open the door—and gosh! You could

hev knocked me over with a match. . . . Poor old Alec was a-hanging from one o' the scantlings. I hustled over to Joe McGougan's place and him and Sam are gone over to the barn and then to get the reeve, and they wanted me to come and get you.'

"The farmer wiped his perspiring forehead with his coat sleeve. 'Then you didn't wait to cut him down?' I asked.

"'Me cut him down? By gosh! I guess not.'

"'Did you feel him to see if he was still warm?' I asked quickly, but quietly.

"'Who? Me? Me feel him! and him a-hanging there? Say, Mr. Gordon, I was that scared—I got into my buggy and druv down that road like Old Nick was after me.'

"Really," continued Mr. Gordon, "the way he answered, and the way he looked was so funny that in spite of the tragedy I had to laugh.

"When we reached the barn we made arrangements for an inquest, although one was not necessary; and later on I helped to settle up the old man's estate. The place was advertised for sale or to rent, but you might as well have advertised a rattlesnake's den. Nobody would go near the place. There was no other house occupied nearer than McGougan's or McGregor's, and both were about half a mile away.

\* \* \* \* \*

"In filling one of my week-night engagements I had to pass the farm, and it seemed more desolate in appearance each time I went by. The buildings had not been kept in repair for the last few years, and the windows of the house soon became broken and the doors shattered by the wintry winds. The little verandah roof

caved in during the winter's accumulated snows, and the foundations of the milk house had rotted at the rear end and had given the front such a tilt that you'd have needed a step-ladder to get in. The whole place would give you the blues.

"During the following summer I did most of my travelling by bicycle, and as the roads were then fairly good, I did not mind the trips after dark. One hot July night I was a little later than usual in getting away from my prayer-meeting at Scotch Settlement. The day had been unusually sultry, and the sky around sunset was quite threatening, but I thought I might make home before any storm came up. I was hardly started before there was a distant rumbling of thunder, and in a few minutes the rain commenced. I peddled hard, thinking it better to cover the nine miles if at all possible, but I could not have made more than half a mile when it seemed as if there was a cloud-burst. The water came down in sheets and I was wet to the skin. The thunder was terrible: I'd never heard anything like it before. I was compelled to dismount, and only by the lightning flashes could I keep going. The road by this time was in bad shape, and further wheeling that night was impossible.

"I was then opposite the deserted farm of old Alec Rollins, and decided to take shelter in the barn. I have never been troubled with timidity, and the fact of a suicide having taken place there did not deter me for a moment. I needed shelter, and was not particular where I got it during a storm like that. By the continuous lightning I made my way to the old gate. I suppose it had not even been opened for many weeks—perhaps months. The barn was nearer the road than the house, so I made for it. The door was the kind that slides

along an iron runway, but it didn't work very well and I had to tug hard to open it wide enough to admit me and my wheel. The rain was still driving hard so that I was glad enough to close it as quickly as I could and be out of the storm. I had no light, for I rarely carry matches, and had there been any in my pocket they would have been made useless by the drenching I had received.

"As there was no let-up in the storm, I decided to make the best I could of my unfavorable surroundings and try to get a sleep, continuing my journey when daylight came. I knew the barn had a loft, for we had gone there in investigating the death of the old farmer, and had discovered how he moved a part of the flooring to fasten the rope around the joist. I groped my way around the side until I found the strips that were nailed on two of the scantlings for a ladder. It was then easy enough to reach the loft. I slid one foot at a time very carefully across the floor, trying to find hay or straw. I thought if I found some I could heap it over me and get warm enough to dry out.

"After a while I felt what I was seeking, and was thankful to discover that quite a pile of hay had been left in the loft. I threw off my coat and vest and unlacing my shoes, turned them so that the water would drain out. I lay well back on the pile and pulled as much of the hay over me as was possible. Very soon I was hotter than was comfortable. It was a long time before the storm abated, and though I can sleep through almost anything, the reverberating thunder that night was too much for me to get sufficiently composed for slumber. At last it grew less intense and seemed to be rumbling away seeking other territory to disturb. Then there was quiet—dead stillness. Somehow the silence was

oppressive, and I felt I mustn't turn over and disturb it even by the rustling of the hay. And then something happened that made me for the first time in my life feel creepy. I heard a door bang. The wind had gone down—it was not the wind. McGougans and McGregors were too far away for me to hear the sound I had just heard. It did not come from either of their farms. The door that banged was in Alec Rollins' house. Yet I knew no one was, or would dare to be, in that house.

"For at least once in my life I definitely decided that silence was the better part of valor, and I didn't move a finger. Some minutes must have passed, during which I did not hear a sound. I had about decided to count sheep or do something else that I had heard people say would quiet agitated minds and induce sleep, when I heard a sound right at the side of the barn. It seemed as if someone was feeling their way along the boards. I tried to think that it might be a cow or a pig, but then I knew that there was no stock on that farm. There was no mistaking the next sound! The door was sliding along the runway. The creaking and squeaking was the same noise I had made on dragging it open an hour or two before. Then the door closed. Evidently someone was on the inside of the barn. I hate to say it, but I felt deucedly uncomfortable, and there was a curious sensation at the roots of my hair. If I hadn't been scared I'd have thought it was growing. My hearing has always been good, but it has never been better than that night. I could hear my heart beating.

"Whoever had entered knew the barn well, for the steps taken were without any uncertainty, and then I knew hands were on the same ladder by which I had ascended. Slowly but firmly someone was climbing into the loft. It was too dark for me to see anything, and

somehow I wasn't anxious to be seeing things just then. The loft flooring nearest the ladder had neither hay nor straw on it, so that I plainly heard feet planted there. Then there was movement in my direction.

"Step by step, nearer and nearer, slowly but surely, somebody or some creature was coming towards me. I tried in vain to forget the limp figure that I had once seen hanging just below where I was lying. I tried to forget unfastening the rope while the reeve and the McGougans eased the poor old farmer's body to the floor, but I could not. The whole scene became gruesomely vivid again, and I felt certain that my midnight visitor was the ghost of Alec Rollins. I knew and yet I dare not speak. Perhaps he wanted me to speak. There was a cessation of movement for a few seconds —they seemed hours to me. Then the movement continued."

The listener started to object to some of the statements, but Mr. Gordon went on:

"Let me finish. Don't interrupt. Yes, I know all about that. I'd have argued that way until that night. Maybe ghosts don't make noises, eh? Well, you weren't there—I was. The object, whoever or whatever it was, kept slowly but surely coming nearer. What was going to happen I did not know, but I certainly was nearly choking with fright. I found it hard to breathe. Then I felt the hay stalks being pushed against my feet through the pressure of other feet. If ever my hair was pompadour, it was during the next few minutes. The feet of the ghost were close to mine. Then the movement ceased for a few seconds. I wondered what was going to happen next. Very gently there seemed to be effort to locate me. The next step forward, and one foot was placed on my knee. Another step and the end of me

seemed to be near, for the other foot was brought heavily and squarely on my chest. The McGougans and McGregors were the only people within reach, and they were half a mile away, and it was midnight. But I did my level best to make them hear. I daren't deny it. With all the courage people think I have, I certainly let out a terrific yell. If they could have heard it, I think it would have been blood-curdling. And then I think I swooned.

"The grey streaks of dawn saw me out on the road headed for home, and with my nerves in bad shape. My wife could see something was wrong, and as soon as I felt able I narrated my strange and startling experiences.

"What does she think about it all? Well, she certainly knows I was not home until shortly after daylight. She heard later of the congregation's anxiety for my safety during the terrific storm, for they knew I was on the road somewhere. She knew by my appearance that I slept in the hay. I have no other witnesses. She accepts everything but the appearance of the ghost. She thinks it was a nightmare or a bad dream.

"Anyway, I took no more risks. After that night, if ever it looked the least bit like a thunderstorm, I stayed at Scotch Settlement till morning."

## CHAPTER IX.

## The Room That Was Poor John's

IT was one of the queerest and most uncared-for looking hamlets I had ever seen. With one exception, there was not a tidy-looking dwelling along the whole piece of the concession that was designated Sullivan's Mills. The decaying and dilapidated old saw-mill stood at one end of the straggling row of buildings. Two or three wooden structures that had long since ceased to be used for dwellings or stores had roofs in various stages of collapse. Stones from schoolboy hands had crashed all remaining glass from the windows. Missiles of various kinds lay on the rotting floors. Weeds and tangled shrub-growth had been let grow unhindered.

Incredible though it may read, the author vouches for the absolute accuracy of the record he now makes. On one of the two unattractive-looking business places the hamlet possessed were three crudely-printed signs, one below the other—

WILLIAM A——, UNDERTAKER  
ICE CREAM AND CHOCOLATES  
SKUNKS SKINNED

Of all the business combinations he has ever seen in a store not larger than twelve by thirty feet, this one at Sullivan's Mills takes the red ribbon. Possibly it was not as incongruous as it appeared, for anyone who took ice-cream and chocolates in a room where skunks were skinned might well need the services of an undertaker!

The church was surrounded by a picket-fence which had lost half of its pickets: a portion of the fence lay where the last winter's snow-drifts had weighted it to the ground. Only a few odd bits of paint were clinging to the church building. Sun and storm, and the decaying influences of time, had left it dirty and desolate-looking. The steps to the church door, with its wide-gaping cracks, were as irregular and dangerous as they well could be and still hold together. There was not a cheery or hopeful aspect about the whole place except the blue sky above.

And so the visiting preacher was prepared for the worst—and he was not disappointed. The front entrance to the home to which he had been directed had an old storm-door crudely nailed over it, and was evidently not in use. When Mrs. Skillens opened the kitchen door the visitor found it hard to be cordial. She was pleasant enough in her greeting, but in appearance and odor she and the whole house were well-nigh repulsive. In college days boys would sometimes speak of a certain individual who had been "good to his vest"—that is to say he had given it something of all he had to eat. One could hardly imagine more spots and patches of food and other out-of-place matter on any garment than had gathered on Mrs. Skillens' faded old blouse.

Her uncombed hair had a greasy and straggly appearance. An attempt to keep it up was made by the aid of a doughnut-like twist at the top. From the centre of the twist a stubby wisp of hair spread itself untidily around.

She was perfectly frank about the matter of entertainment. "I didn't want to take you, but nobody else

will do it, so if you take just what I can get you are welcome. I don't make any fuss about anybody. Some folks are so fussy they're always cleaning up. I've got over that." She certainly had.

There are certain experiences that are best passed over. Suffice it to say that more of the evening meal went stealthily into a carefully paper-lined pocket of the preacher than into the place where food is supposed to go. It was simply impossible to look at Mrs. Skillens and retain an appetite. While she cleared away such articles as were not perpetually on the table the preacher managed to dispose of the pocketed portion of his supper among a flourishing patch of burdocks.

At last the night wore on and retiring-time came. The guest-room was at the end of a long hallway, leading to the front door. The front part of the house was kept fast-closed both as to windows and door. A prisoner crossing the Bridge of Sighs could scarcely have found his surroundings more cheerless than did the preacher as he followed his shuffling hostess with her flickering candle. "Many's the night last winter," she said, sighingly, "that I walked along here when poor John was dying. My feet got so bad, and he kept getting worse, so we brought him down here so's we wouldn't have to climb so many stairs. He was afraid of drafts so we fastened up the hall-door and stuffed the window-cracks, and I've never bothered to do anything with them since he went."

She held the candle in the bedroom doorway for a moment or two. "My! but it looks natural-like"—it probably also smelled natural-like to Mrs. Skillens. "I can almost see him there! He was always looking this way, watching for me. He was awful patient right to

the end. He died on that very bed just six months and a week ago this very night. He was terrible fond of that patchwork quilt. It was made by the Ladies' Aid.

"I don't believe much in spirits or ghosts, do you?" The visitor had no desire to do so at that hour of the night, nor in that particular spot. A depressing silence followed. "But all the same," she added in awesome tones, "when I pass this room at this time of night it seems to me poor John is very near. I almost expects to see him." With a tearful sniffle she concluded, "He sure did suffer. I'll never forget the way he groaned—but you'll be wanting to get into bed." (I never in my life wanted less to get into bed). "Goodnight sir, I hope you have a good sleep."

After much effort I managed to pull out the sun-yellowed newspaper that had been carefully wedged between the window sashes to keep the draft off poor John. I could not but feel that the words of intended comfort that are so often and rather carelessly uttered must be true of John—"Ah well! we know he's better off." I felt he could scarcely be anything but better off in any other place than in that dingy, dirty, stuffy room. Two wire nails had to be wiggled out before the lower sash could be moved. Never had I more appreciated God's good gift of fresh air. But it would have needed several days of much more ventilation than the small window-space permitted, to have sweetened the bedding and other "smelly" things that had been left in the dead air since "poor John's" departure.

The candle-light caused one shining object in a frame near the head of the bed to show more conspicuously than anything else. It was the name-plate from the coffin-lid of John Skillens, and was another addition to the discomfort of the guest-room. Every step I took

caused the floor to creak in a peculiarly eerie sort of way. John Masefield's lines were recalled:

*"The way the stairs creaked made you wonder  
If dead men's bones were hidden under."*

In my tramps over western prairies and through wolf and wildcat-infested woods I have had to do some things that tested what little courage I may have possessed, but I simply could not muster up enough courage to get into poor John's bed in conventional night attire. Partly clad I prepared to try to rest. My first feeling or thought was that I was lying down with the usual conglomeration of articles that a man carries in his hip pocket; but the discomfort was in several other places and I discovered that the irregularities were in the bed. If the suffering husband had to lie on that knotty mattress with its mousey smell, it certainly must have hastened his departure. It was the lumpiest contraption that ever rested on four bed legs. There was no strip of mattress lengthwise or broadwise wide enough for even the smallest "anatomy" to rest on without discomfort. Had a tick been filled with potatoes it would have been about as restful. But there was no other place to lie, so blowing out the dim light of the candle, I tried to forget Mrs. Skillens' narration of poor John's closing days.

No train was available until Monday morning, and to think of thirty-six hours more beneath that roof was not conducive to composure of mind. But to the longest night there must be a daydawn, and after a few uneasy "snoozes" I saw my room for the first time by daylight. Strange what foolish little things of far-away days will press in upon one's memory, relieving the pressure of certain otherwise burdensome hours. Just why the story of "Christie's Old Organ" should have been re-

called, I know not. It was in early boyhood days that I had taken part in its musical rendition. But I recalled the part of the story in which, after one of the mission services little Christie rushes into the tiny attic home and says to his old companion in poverty, "Oh, Master Treffy, what a night we've had!"

After Mrs. Skillens' goodnight reminder of what had happened in that room exactly six months and one week before, and after trying to rest on a very uncomfortable bed in a very dirty room and on very musty bedding, I found myself again and again repeating Christie's words to the suffering old organ-grinder—"Oh, Master Treffy, what a night we've had."

"May the recording angel drop a kindly tear," as dear old Dr. Meyer used to say, and blot out the sin, if it be a sin, of trying to give a kindly answer to the customary breakfast-time question as to whether the bed was found to be comfortable. I apologized for disturbing the well-nigh hermetically-sealed room, and tried to avoid any reply regarding my comfort. Mrs. Skillens explained that she had spent a lot of time with a screw-driver and a kitchen-knife "fixing" the paper in the window.

We bowed our heads for the "Grace before meat", and never did I feel more need of divine blessing than after tasting some of the things on the table that Sabbath morning in Sullivan's Mills. At each meal, whenever Mrs. Skillens passed the handleless milk pitcher, she took hold of it with a dirty finger well down the spout. Every plate had some greasy or sticky reminder of what it had contained at a preceding meal. The habit that the Hon. Wm. E. Gladstone formed of taking thirty-two chews to the swallow is in several records. Had he stayed with Mrs. Skillens I believe England's

Grand Old Man would have reversed his practice and would have taken thirty-two swallows to the chew.

The services of the day included a morning "outside appointment" and then afternoon Sunday School and evening service in Sullivan's Mills. A kindly farmer, whose wife had provided a delightful noon-day meal in their well-kept home, drove in for the evening service. At the close he came to the front to ask if the preacher would go out and spend the night with them. He would look after the driving to the station in the morning. The preacher was not over-demonstrative in his make-up, but he had an almost overwhelming desire to hug the farmer then and there.

As tactfully as possible he asked permission of his hostess to accept the invitation. With a heart filled with thanksgiving he quickly packed his bag and closed down the window that the room might continue to be an odorous reminder of past days. Mrs. Skillens certainly could have no complaint over any lack of cordiality with which he said goodbye, but every truly Christian man should have a "divine discontent" wherever untidiness and dirt prevail. The visitor thanked her for her kindness in taking him in.

Doubtless the wideness of God's mercy reaches even to dirty Christians, but some of us feel, like Sam Jones, whose biblical exegesis is not commended, but who once said that he was glad that the Word said "In my Father's house are many mansions", for there were some Christians with whom he felt he did not wish to live, even in heaven.

## CHAPTER X. Among the Nova Scotian Hills

SAM GEMMELL never missed an opportunity to tell newcomers of his long years of service in the "Stone Church". He had opened the doors, storm or shine, for forty years, "and ain't never missed a Sunday", he would add with a nod of pride.

That achievement gave him an authority that few dared to resist, and many things to which objection would otherwise have been made were tolerated on the score of his age and lengthy service. Ministers and elders and superintendents and organists had come and gone, but Sam stayed on and intended so to do.

No one who knew Sam ever suggested that the church was too warm or too cool, or that the seats were dusty, or the ventilation unsatisfactory. Sam was not sure of some things, but he was quite convinced that after forty years on the job he had nothing to learn pertaining to the duties of a caretaker. He resented any interference.

Visitors called him "The Sexton", but around the village he was known as "Sarah's Sam", to distinguish him from a nearby cousin of the same name—Sarah being Sam's wife. Owing to the colour of his hair, the boys called him "Carrots"—when at safe distances. A physical defect made him come down much more heavily on one foot than on the other. In the church aisle it sounded, as one of the villagers put it, "like dot and carry one".

Rarely was there a service that Sam did not willingly or unwillingly disturb in some way or other. If

a window had to be opened, a register closed, a dog dragged out, or the furnace vigorously shaken, it was usually done during such time as the preacher had hoped would be the most impressive part of his message. When all eyes were turned in his direction the old man felt more than ever the importance of his position.

Despite the fact that Sam disregarded the impressive moments in the sermon by attending to such duties as shaking the furnace or opening windows, he nevertheless had strict rules for all other worshippers, and told us, with much emphasis that, "them what can't behave in God's House hadn't oughta come. I remember the first preacher us had used to say it was no place for anybody to be flippous or frivilant." He paid tribute to his wife's genuine interest in religion by stating that she had read her Bible through ten times. And that caused him to speak of other things. He wished we could see her garden and flowers. "Last year she had the finest heliotroops anybody ever set eyes on. Say, they was jim-dandies. They used to fill every room in the house with their fragments."

Once he nearly lost her. She had to spend some weeks in the city hospital. That we might realize the seriousness of the situation he told us that the morning of the operation the doctors had given her "three o' them epidemics and afterwards she lost consciousness for over two hours."

The night we took tea at Sam's home he rather puzzled us by saying, "You must do your own stretchin'", which we later discovered meant that we were not to wait for things to be passed. Not infrequently we heard it elsewhere in remote districts of that province. Girls taking positions as housemaids

would ask whether the family did their own stretching, as they did not want to wait on table.

In the minister's absence, Sam was keenly sensitive of his responsibilities and indispensability. Usually he was at the village railway station to meet the "supply", and he was always waiting in or near the vestry to instruct any stranger as to the procedure necessary. The visitor was informed that the glass of water under the pulpit had been "changed reg'lar every Sunday mornin' for forty years".

Sam never forgot to give instructions about speaking "right out, good and loud, on account of them what's deef". On the occasion of the writer's first visit Sam referred especially to "John Lang and Old Martha Dean". That no necessary information be withheld, Sam explained that "Martha used to have one of them accoosty things", but that on the night of the chicken supper in the basement, she had slipped on a "biled" potato. On her downward course, she had grabbed the nearest individual, who happened to be the staid and respected representative elder. The good man was quite carried off his feet by the unexpected embrace, and in an undignified and uncomfortable manner sat on the floor with Martha. Amidst much commotion and scatteration, someone in the crowd had stepped on Martha's "accoosty" and put it "clean out of kilter".

Sam had his own way of describing the ministers who acted as holiday supply. "No, I didn't like the chap we had this summer—not nigh so well as him what we had last year. He read his sermons, but kind o' pretended he wasn't—kept lifting his head every few seconds like a hen does when she's taking a drink. He tried to interfere with the way I fixed the winders and then he preached too much about them Israelites and

Jebuzites. He was allus a wandering off after them foreigners in Beulah Land or some other place. The feller last year talked about us folks and never bothered yelling about them dead foreigners. I likes a man what's right out plain and practical, and preaches at them what's right there in the church.

"I allus says, 'taint no use a settin' out a row of fine shoes if they won't fit anybody what's come for shoes. You know what I means? Lots of chaps maybe preaches good sermons, but they ain't for us,—kind o' don't fit.'" As he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, he added contemptuously, "No! they ain't our size.

"But we sure have had some of the best preachers in Canada in our pulpit. We once had Principal Grant here. Say, he could knock the spots off any of them. And he was brought up in Nova Scotia, mind you. I mind he said that some Canadians thought we wus behind the times down here. And then he told us a story about some College in Scotland what hadn't very fine buildings. Some American chap what wus seein' the country said he wus surprised they didn't have a decent college. He said there wus hundreds better than that in his country. An' the Principal said that the Scotty what wus a-showing 'em through the place said, 'Eh, mon, but you ought to see the men we produce! They're no' the loose-jawed kind'. Purty good answer that, wusn't it?"

The graveyard at the back of the church had been in Sam's care for many years, and he was ready to give the life story of most of those who had passed away during his forty years as grave-digger. One morning we heard him telling a little group of old folks that he had dug one hundred and ninety-nine graves. There

seemed to be a tone of sadness, and a suggestion that he would like the number to be even as soon as possible. The old folks passed into the church without expressing any willingness to co-operate.

Sam's use and misuse of certain words made his conversation exceedingly interesting. The day the church chimney took fire and the roof started to burn, he was naturally very much excited and feared lest the building that was the pride of his heart might be destroyed. The vigorous efforts of the villagers, however, saved it, with very little damage done.

It happened that the week before the fire, the old lamp brackets along the walls had been replaced by two ornamental chandeliers. Sam informed us that what he was "most afeered of was that them there gondoliers would burn down and blow up". On another occasion when he was discussing the high cost of living, he attributed the blame to "them politics fellers what makes it impossible for poor folks to make the odds and ends meet".

Sam's whole life had been lived not far from the Atlantic, and many of the villagers added fishing to their other vocations. Sam frequently used the fisherman's language. One Sunday morning old Widow Jardine was taken with a weak spell. With the aid of her sister, she managed to reach the vestibule, where Sam always had a pail of water with a tin cup attached. To Sam's dismay she fainted and he hastily called out the village undertaker. Sam was telling us of the excitement and said, "We did what I allis does when anybody faints, we hove her on her back and slacked her collar".

We had three weeks of special services with Sam

as general supervisor—at least he believed so. He rang the bell each night supposedly half an hour and five minutes respectively before the service. There seemed to be a good deal of variation in the five-minute bell and we ventured to refer to it. "I'll tell you!" he said, "Folks often wonders how I does it, but I waits till I sees quite a bunch a-coming up the road, and then I rings it and it's just right, and there's always a tidy few for the preacher to start on. Mind you, if I didn't do that, there often wouldn't be enough to sing 'Praise God' decent-like."

Our acquaintanceship resulted in occasional correspondence. Sam's letters are written in large, straggling hand-writing, strangely punctuated. He wrote us of his wife's long sickness and then of her death, and there was revealed a real affection and deep sorrow.

Two years later he wrote of his second marriage, which had taken place six months before. He felt he had been less fortunate than in his first venture. He said he was writing in the church—the "safety first" movement had evidently reached his village—and he dwelt at some length on the good qualities of his first wife. He added: "Maybe a pore old feller can't hope to strike luck twice in a lifetime, but the more I sees of this woman, the more I misses my first missus." He closes his letter by telling us that we shall not likely see him again and that he is ready to go "any time it's God's will". In his own way he suggests that he would rather go and be with his "first woman" in heaven than stay down here with his second wife.

In that beautiful spirit of resignation, except for another brief experience, we leave our friend Sam.

\*      \*      \*      \*

**"From scenes like these 'Old Scotia's grandeur  
springs'"**

The primary object of this chapter is to tell of the hospitality of a white log cottage that is hidden away among the recesses of some beautiful Nova Scotian hills. On the writer's third visit to the Maritime village his friend Sam was the only person at the station to meet him. Sam explained that the minister was at a christening, and the elder couldn't leave his store. "They're a-having you stay at old John Collins' place. Do you mind where you went for tea the last time you wus here? You said you knew their boys in Montreal. Ah! that's the place; way up among the Perth Hills as they calls 'em. And mind you, there ain't a finer couple in a day's march than Old John Collins and his missus. They don't get down to the village much, so I says to the minister that as you and me wus friends I'd get you out there."

The Collins home had stood among the lonely hills for a century. Indeed, it was one of the very few remaining log houses that had been so substantially built and carefully preserved as to withstand the decaying influences of time for so many decades. It was comfortably old-fashioned, and the old couple desired no change. Through the years of toil and the upbringing of their now widely-separated family the place had become increasingly dear to them. It had been built by John's parents in early pioneer days.

Before we could reach the cottage door it was pulled wide open, and the motherly old soul, with a sunshiny face and a spotlessly white apron and neat lace cap, was extending a welcome. No one needed to be told that Mother Collins was the type of woman who makes a home. Despite her four-score and three years she was

still, in the poet's word, "A woman of stirring life whose heart was in her home". Her companion for sixty-one years was steadyng himself with a staff that looked as if it could tell interesting stories of its owner's toils and tramps through the valleys and hills amongst which the Collins home lay hidden.

With delightful cordiality the dear old lady clasped the visitor's hand in both of hers, using one to add a few "love-taps" to the clasp as she continued to voice their welcome. In his quiet, deliberate way the old man said, "When you get through holding it, Mother, maybe I'll get a chance to have a shake". With a merry laugh she replied, "I forgot all about you, John", and relinquished her handclasp. John's welcome was no less sincere. His humble garb could not hide the nobleness and strength of his character.

Sam deposited the baggage, and after the usual exchange of pleasantries, returned to his duties in the village.

"My! but we're glad to see you! It gets a bit lonesome and old folks like us can't run around any more. Now make yourself comfortable—don't be afraid of using the cushions, we haven't got any that are just to look at." It was a quaint little sitting-room into which the visitor had been shown. Mrs. Collins had evidently just washed and ironed the antimacassars, reminders of the days when hair oil endangered the cleanliness of the few upholstered chairs.

A what-not in one corner contained an interesting assortment of grandmother's things, a mahogany tea-caddy with its several compartments, a small writing case of similar wood, a china cat that served as a bank in grandmother's girlhood days, a small leather-covered pair of bellows, a pair of candle snuffers and several

plates and pitchers that would have delighted the heart of a collector of antiques. A tin-type of her husband in youthful days crowned the top. The oval centre table contained the album, with its amusingly interesting photographs, and the well-worn family Bible, with its awesome pictures of the Judgment Day and of Hades.

There was a reverent tenderness in the way the old man handled the Book. It had been a wedding present from his parents and "every Sabbath Day since then" it had been used. Other Bibles were all right for weekdays, but on the Sabbath the revered volume on the centre table must be the one from which to read. "Father never let the children put any other book on top of the Bible, and they only looked at this one when they sat on his knee," added Mrs. Collins. "Then we used to sing a lot on Sunday. Yes! that's the old harmonium. There weren't many in our early days—at least not in these parts. Yes, take the cloth off." The visitor looked at the uneven keys, most of which had lost their ivory tops. What few remained were yellowed with the passing of over three-score years.

"Those were happy days, weren't they, Father? We never let the children make a noise nor play like they did other days, but we tried to make the Sabbath happy for them, and we were all together the whole day. Father always let one of them ask the blessing that day and then the others would repeat texts.

"After breakfast we had family prayers and then we all drove to church in the democrat. Sometimes when the roads were bad it would take us over two hours to go the six miles, wouldn't it, Father? You see there was no church nearer than that in those days.

"After church the children knew they must get into the democrat quietly and nobody said anything until

we were half-way home. Then Father would say something about the sermon and the children would tell what they could remember. Maybe it was hard for them to be kept quiet so long, but both our George and our Fred—they're our two preachers you know—say it did them a lot of good to have to remember what the preacher said. They listened better because they knew Father would be asking questions, and I think they liked it.

"Then in the afternoon and evening we'd sing," Mother Collins drew up the corner of her apron and pressed it around her eyes. The sacred memories of those far-away Sabbaths when the children God had given them sang His praises in the old log home were a bit too much for her. But she soon regained control of her voice. "They loved to sing: I can seem to hear them yet. One of Father's favourites was 'Guide me, O Thou Great Jehovah', and then we liked 'Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing'. The tune was called Lyngham, and it sounded lovely when the children were old enough to take the parts. Then there was 'Around the Throne of God in heaven' and 'Oh, think of the Home over there'. The boys liked 'Pull for the shore, sailor', and Helen always wanted 'Joy to the world' and 'Unto the hills'."

It was time for John to get in a word or two—"We haven't seen any of the children for over a year. They're all busy and it's a long way to come. George offered to have us live with him in Montreal, and Fred wanted us to go to Toronto, and the others were just as nice about it, but we're afraid we'd be lonely for the old place." He glanced upward as if he were seeing things afar off, and then quietly added, "We won't have very long to wait now, and we think we'd rather stay right here. Mother and I would be out of place in the city I'm

afraid; I know I would, for I've always lived among God's hills. Thank God they're all good children, if we do say it. We don't hear very often from the boys. George has a big congregation and he preaches around a lot they tell me. He writes on the typewriter, or he has one of those secretaries do it, I guess. I never tell him, but it don't seem the same as when he used to write with a pen, but they're good boys, thank God! They had a good mother,"—this in a tone of loving appreciation that no print can reproduce. "Yes! a good mother. She thought more about their characters than about their clothes." Then, as though there might be some misunderstanding on the part of the listener the old man said quickly, "but mind you, their mother never neglected their clothes either."

When retiring time came the Bible was handed the visitor. He suggested that the head of the home should read. "Please, Mr. Collins, you take worship tonight, and if you wish I'll take it tomorrow night." Somewhat hesitatingly the old man took back the Bible.

Never will the writer forget that period of worship. There was no hurry; no carelessness of reading; no suggestion that he was merely performing a duty. It was a child reading the Word of the Father he loved, and when he closed the Book he did it in such a way as to make one feel he was handling pages that were very sacred to him.

When all were kneeling there were several seconds of silence, and then one knew by the opening petitions that here was a man who had often talked with God but who had never lost the sense of awe in the Divine presence. In the quiet of the hills and valleys he had day by day lifted up his eyes and voice to the God and Father, whose kindly providence he recognized as he

tended a few of the cattle that roamed among some of the thousand hills that were the Lord's. One felt that here was one nearing the close of life's day whose workshop was below but whose real dwelling was above.

The visitor could not refrain from glancing at the old man as he prayed. In the deepest and best sense of the word he was in his element. He was at rest in God. Someone has written of "the divinely lighted faces of aged saints". Certainly John Collins' face was lighted up for, and in, worship.

No careless words could be uttered after that vibrantly sincere "Amen". We quietly went up the narrow stairs with the old man's benediction bringing to our hearts something of that peace that passeth all understanding.

Mother Collins drew the dark red curtains that were around the four-posted bedstead. A tufted bed-spread was turned back from pillows and bolster. "Maybe you aren't used to feather-beds, but John thinks it's more comfortable than any of the new-fangled mattresses. Good-night and God bless you."

As the preacher sank into the feathers he thought of George and Fred, and other members of the family who were living worthily and helpfully. Their real names may not be printed, but there are thousands who thank God for the influences that had their beginnings in the little log home that lies snugly where the hills had "made a hidden valley of their own".

In the morning the guest looked over the well-thumbed pages of the books that were the Collins children's library: the *Peep o' Day*; *Line upon Line*; *Pilgrim's Progress*; *Fox's Book of Martyrs*; *Tales of the Covenanters* and a few others. But above all the rest

they were taught the stories and truths of the Book that lay on the centre table, and of which Mother Collins said quietly, as she saw the visitor turning its pages, "We brought the children up on that Book. John is that fond of it and has had it so long that he told me one night he did not like to think of leaving it behind when it came time for him to go."

How mightily has Canada been enriched by the boys and girls who have gone forth from such humble but godly Nova Scotian homes as that in which John and Mary Collins had performed "the daily round, the common task". The poet's words are as true of the New Scotia as of the Old:

*"From scenes like these, Old Scotia's grandeur springs,  
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad."*

## CHAPTER XI.

## The Patricks' Guest Room

“**Y**OU are to stay with the Patricks. Mrs. Patrick is a kindly soul and will take good care of you, and perhaps you may do her husband some good—he never comes to church.” So wrote the missionary who had Black’s Corners as one of his three widely-separated appointments.

These husbands who never enter church constitute one of the missionary’s problems, and it is often a put-up job that the visiting preacher shall be the guest of one of these problematic personages. The anxiety that the good wife and the missionary exhibit in the matter usually forewarns the wary husband of any helpful approach, and he avoids the obvious trap. The night of the preacher’s arrival, however, Bill Patrick happened to have taken just enough liquor to make him pleasantly unmanageable and unusually agreeable. He was bound to stay around to welcome the preacher—a thing he would not have done had he refrained from drinking. Bill made the best possible attempt to appear sober and was amusingly friendly.

The painfully embarrassed wife was doubtless glad that it was late enough to suggest that the visitor might like to retire. Her best efforts to keep Bill quiet were in vain. He was not to be denied the pleasure of accompanying the preacher to the guest room, nor of taking part in the conversation. He made a ridiculously brave attempt to climb the stairs with steady step, but came perilously near knocking the lamp out of his wife’s hand in one of his side lurches. The preacher put a guiding hand under Bill’s elbow, but Bill desired no such un-

spoken insinuation, and quickly removed his arm from the kindly-intended support. Glancing at the preacher with mingled reproof and indignation, he staggered independently upward.

Despite Mrs. Patrick's quiet protestation, he sat down on the carefully made bed as soon as the guest room was reached. After the dangerous exhilaration of climbing the stairs, he was glad to reach a safety zone. Nor was he willing to leave the preacher until he had explained many of the pictures that marred the bedroom wall.

Aunt Harriet's photograph was surmounted by the horns of a deer that "Uncle Jim shot well-nigh thirty years ago". The hat that Harriet was wearing looked as though it might have been shot at by Uncle Jim at a still earlier period. It was perched precariously and crookedly on a mass of hair well back on her head, and appeared to be several sizes too small. A part of the iron head-rest that photographers once used to hold the victim steady could be seen on one side of the rigidly posed head. The compressed lips, glaring eyes, and arms pressed tightly at each side of her body told how serious a business it must have been for Harriet to be photographed. "She was a queer old codger" hic-coughed Bill. "It run in the family; her father was awful queer and terrible brusk; yes sir, Aunt Harriet come by her queer ways honestly; she looks kinda odd, don't you think?" Bill's description appeared to be accurate. "That's my oldest brother and his dog," he continued, pointing to a much-faded tintype. "Jim died out West. He'd never stay nowhere very long. He was one o' them blokes what's allus wantin' to be where they ain't."

As we passed to the next family portrait Mrs. Pat-

rick said, "This one is grandma on his side. It was taken just after grandpa died." "We never could get me old dad to get his'n took," chimed in Bill, "he kind o' thought like he did about going to a hospital—it was a sure sign o' death. Ain't nothin' in that, eh? That's what I say!" Then with a nod of the head he added significantly, "Though, mind you, grandma kicked off purty soon after hers was took."

Grandma was enshrouded in many folds of crepe. The mass of mourning apparel was relieved only by the pallor of the timid face. Perhaps there was a premonition of the event grandpa had feared. Just below the picture hung a roughly-made and crudely-gilded shallow box with a glass cover. It contained the name-plate from grandma's coffin—

Mrs. Norah Patrick  
Died October 1895  
Aged 79 Years.

"Kind o' nice to keep it, ain't it?" said Bill. The visitor, too truthful to reply, passed silently to the next object of interest. A tin-type portrait of the preacher "what buried grandma" was appropriately placed near to the name plate. The preacher's chin appeared to be painfully elevated by the immense collar, around which was fastened a bow-tie of equally large proportions.

"Queer, ain't it, how time's is changed," chimed in Bill. "Say, when he used to come to the house we kids wus scared stiff fear we couldn't answer his questions on the catechism and all that there sort o' stuff. All of us had to leave off working or playing when he showed up, and say! he'd read one o' them terble long chapters from Dutronmi or Jermya and he sure could pray wi' out ceasing. Say, when he ast the blessing it was as long

as some church prayers, and us kids hated to be kept a-waiting so long 'cause, mind you, we had a good meal whenever the parson come—you bet we did." Mrs. Patrick nudged Bill into momentary silence, but he quickly broke out again to make modern application of his youthful memories. "Anyhow, preachers don't ask them questions about the catechism nowadays. Guess they can't, 'cause they don't learn 'em themselves, eh? An' you bet kids ain't scared o' preachers any more—nur o' anything else, eh? Gosh, times is changed all right."

Bill also insisted on personally pointing out the superlative merits of the next bit of decorative art. "Home Sweet Home", in variedly colored wools had been made by grandma during her closing days. "She was a wonder at them things. She did 'em on cardboards all punched full o' little holes. She made a jimdandy one that my sister Aggie's got in their parlor. It's got a tree and a church on it and 'God bless our Home' all done in them there fancy wools, and her well-nigh eighty years. It got first prize at the show the year she done it. Jim Reynolds, the undertaker, made the frame. He got to be awful friendly with grandma 'fore she died."

Bill pulled himself together for a final tribute. "She just couldn't be beat on anything like rag-rugs or socks or bedquilts. She could make most anything. Gosh! women folks ain't useful no more. Buys everything ready done for 'em. Gets all the grub in cans. Don't even bake bread no more. Don't do none of them things grandma used to. Don't make nothing except the bed maybe. Ain't that a purty thing? Eh? What? Done every bit by her own hands."

Aunt Susie's picture was embedded in a deep, mas-

sive frame of successive layers of oak and gaudy gilding. It had slipped from its original position and lay well down the oval mask. Susie's hat rested rakishly over one eye. A ringlet from a wealth of hair had been carefully displayed on a loudly-patterned collar. To have tarried too long before Susie's picture might have disturbed one's night's rest. There was an expression of painful determination on her face suggesting the seriousness of the whole business. An undue amount of hands had been photographed and the fingers were as far apart as Aunt Susie could stretch them. The photographer had perhaps done her justice—but it was mercy she needed. Just below the heavy frame was a much soiled card on which were the familiar lines beginning,

“Sleep sweetly in this quiet room.”

The visitor rather wished he had not looked at the photographs.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A Night With the Outcasts of a Great City

WE had arranged to spend a night in one of the greatest all-night Missions in the world. It was situated in an ill-smelling, crowded district where narrow streets and filthy courtyards were the only playgrounds of poor little gutter-snipes as filthy as the refuse and mire in which they trod. Most of them were crippled or disfigured, and had as their only clothing pieces of ragged undershirts. Scores of such were playing and crying and quarrelling as they wiggled or limped or crept down the steps or up from the cellars of the towering tenements that imprisoned them in an atmosphere of poison.

For hours we tramped around the district that we might gain a better idea of the task that confronted the Mission staff. Every street corner had its gilded saloon made bright and attractive by money from the scanty earnings of the wretched-looking, sin-smitten creatures whose own miserable dwellings were dimly lighted and repellent. Faces bearing evil's terrible imprint could scarcely fail to cause any decent onlooker to shudder. Sad-eyed and bedraggled women wearily slouched along every alley, their appearance and gait telling the pathetically awful story of the life they had lived. Other sorrow-stricken ones were reaping the harvests that were not of their own sowing, and had been slowly brought down to direst poverty by those whom they had never ceased to love, and for whom they had toiled and hoped.

Rough and tough-looking men were sitting on curb-

stones and tenement steps, or lounging against dirty walls, the type that gravitates to such a district. In the lanes at the rear of cheap eating-houses children and adults were sorting over the refuse in the garbage barrels, sometimes eating at once what they found, and sometimes thrusting it among their dirty rags.

Many a poor youngster knew nothing of regular or decent meals, and life was a search through gutters and rubbish heaps in an effort to appease the cravings of hunger.

Shouts and oaths of drivers mingled with the incessant clatter. Every few minutes the roar of overhead trains added to the multitude of other distracting noises. Low concert-halls, rat-pits, cock-pits, stale-beer dives and other dens of abomination were in every block.

To expect anybody to live decently in a district like that would be like trying to raise saints in hell! And yet hundreds had found the Way of Life in the midst of all that defilement and had gone forth "apprehended", that they also through the same Redeeming Power might be used to apprehend others.

During the late afternoon the writer took a seat on a rough bench at the rear of the Mission Hall alongside of an unshaven, filthy, bleared-eyed man of thirty-five or less. His clothing was raggedly untidy and sickeningly odorous. For an hour or more he had been groaning in a most disturbing and distressing way. He was a picture of utter despair and misery. Not any too willingly did he respond to the hand-clasp given. There seemed no ray of hope remaining. Every movement and look and word suggested a man who was crushed and broken beyond recovery. He listened fretfully. "Say!" he broke in, "did you ever take any of the d— whiskey? God! It brings nothing but misery, but I'd give any

d---d thing I could get hold of for a drink right now."

Preceding the evening service the visitor conversed with different men as they awaited the hour for commencing. One man, whose joy was apparent, told the story of his own conversion and pointed to others in various parts of the hall. "See that man yonder with his elbow on the back of the seat? Him that's sitting just below Joe Shaffer's picture. Look's all right, eh? Well sir, he's done time! He was a hard 'un, he was. Don't look bad now, eh? Jesus fixed him up for sure. See that gentleman just coming in? He was here last night giving his testimony. He told us how he was once a foreman in P---. Yes sir! had three hundred men in his shop. Then he got off the track and went to pieces. You get him to talk to you. He told the boys last night how eleven years ago he was raking through barrels to find enough rags to cover him. He tied 'em together with ropes. He said he was a sight! Dirty? Done for? You bet he was! He'd been trying to get a bit of sleep on one doorstep after another 'cos the cops kept shifting him. He had been bumming around that way all night. When morning came he was hungry and dead tired and pretty near crazy. Well sir, he made for B---'s saloon; it's just above what they call Charlie's Dance Hall on the toughest street in this district: thought as how he'd spent most of his money there, they'd give him a spot to sit down. When he got inside, the boss told him to get out or he'd kick him out; told him he was a disgrace to the place. Say! that kind of brought him to his senses! He said to himself if he was a disgrace to that place, he was no use to anybody. But that night one of the boys—Joe Keller—was outside doing a bit of work for Jesus and he grabbed him by the arm and got him inside here. When the man told him

what the saloon-keeper had said, Joe said, 'You're just the man Jesus wants. He takes the fellow who's a disgrace to everybody and makes him a gentleman'. And that night he got saved. And say, wasn't it a funny thing, that saloon-keeper what put him out sent his son down here to congratulate him on his reformation. Yes sir! He's superintendent of a large plant now and's worth a small fortune. But you go and talk to him!"

The superintendent of the Mission was insistent that the visitor should stay at his home after the evening's address to his "bums", as he often called them. The phrase on some lips might have implied scorn or contempt, but when one heard him say "my poor bums" in a tone that was full of compassion, he knew that here was a man who had caught much of the Spirit of the One who came to save sinners.

He had often stayed with his "poor bums" well into the early morning hours, but he was not easily persuaded to let any of his visiting speakers do so. At last, however, he yielded, and while some singing was going on in the main hall, he went out to give instructions to one of the recent converts about accompanying the Canadian visitor and furnishing such information as might be desirable. "If you are going to sleep with the bunch," he added, "you'd better have a few newspapers for a pillow. Jim will take care of you and stay alongside of you all night."

We returned to the hall to listen to some of the redeemed men giving their testimonies. "Come on, boys," the leader was saying. "we've had a great meeting; God's been with us. Now you tell what Jesus has done for you." It was an interesting sight. No one needed to be told which of the men would respond to that appeal. The contrast between the saved and the un-

saved is not easily discernable in some gatherings, but here it was so marked that no one would be mistaken. Faces that were once hard and vicious had been made kindly and gentle by the love of Christ.

There was nothing stereotyped about the testimonies. "No matter what I got," began the man who first rose to his feet, "the Jews would soon get 'em; all my clothes went to the hock-shop; but Jesus has found me; you can see that by the clothes I've got on."

"I've cut out the saloons, boys," began a man with a singularly happy-looking face. "I know I can't take Jesus in there and I'm never going any place where I've got to leave my blessed Saviour outside. He's cleaned me up, and given us decent beds in place of the bundles of straw we used to have at our house."

"I was converted in the Salvation Army," began another, "and I once had said I'd never go into one of their old barracks again. It was like this. I went one night to a meeting just to get warm. I'd often been there before, but that night I had a part of a bottle of liquor in me pocket. I had been drinking quite a lot. Well, while they were praying I offered a pal a drink. Say! Quicker'n you can say Jack Robinson one of the Army men grabbed me by the coat collar and then by the pants and chucked me down the stairs. He didn't pick a soft place for me to fall, and I'm telling you it sure hurt. I hardly knew what had struck me, it happened so sudden. While I was looking back to see the fellow that had done the trick, I saw over the inside entrance, 'God Bless You: Come Again'. Boys! I've laughed over it many's the time: chucked headfirst down the stairs and then to read 'God bless you: come again'. I wasn't likely to, was I? No siree! But say! the very chap that chucked me out hooked his arm in mine one

night when I was dragging me wretched self along the street and praise God, I found Jesus that night. Hallelujah!"

A man who has since become prominent in the newspaper world rose to his feet and spoke with culture and confidence. He ended his story by saying, "What a wretched and wrecked prodigal I was—I had utterly failed in life—I had become a heap of useless human rubbish. My wife and two little girls were compelled to leave me and I went unmistakably to the devil.

"But there is a glorious wideness in God's mercy, and He accepted me through Jesus Christ and I found pardon through the Blood of the Cross."

The next speaker told of the change that had come to his home and the effect on his wife and children. From the back of the hall came a vigorous protest from a poor drunken wreck who had been muttering for some moments. The narration of domestic matters was more than he was prepared to hear. "Don't bring no family affairs in, darn you. It ain't good manners." A worker moved quickly to his side and uttered a warning. But the drunken man was too deeply stirred to be quieted. The last sentence he shouted as he was escorted to the door was heard above all else, "He's a d--- fool to bring family affairs in."

"Ah!" started another, "a lot of us was like that. What a fool the devil can make of a man. I know he made one of me. I come into this hall one night when I was crazy with booze and like our friend back there I kicked up such a racket that they put me out. But, bless God, He led me to come here again. It's just seven weeks three nights ago I knelt at that bench and I haven't touched a drop since."

A man who said he was in a good job at the Post Office continued, "Once I was friendless and sick with loneliness. I was bad clear through and lost everything. I got so low I hated myself. I never thought about my wife and the children, though it was nearing Christmas. It didn't matter much to me whether they had a meal or not. For weeks I'd just bum around and never go near them. But Jesus makes all the difference in the world and they know where I am tonight, and they don't have any worry about me any more. I like to come here to tell other fellows they don't need to stay down. Jesus can lift any man out of the pit."

"I'm only a janitor," began a man who looked as though he were recovering from a serious illness, "but God sure has done a lot for me: I was a drunkard, a thief and a blackguard, but Jesus did what He did to the man with the palsy—He touched me, touched this man right here, boys! And though I'm only a janitor He's treated me like I was a king!"

Two joyous men started to speak at the same time. Playfully the older one shook his fist as he called across, "I got d' start o' you Jake to tell about what God has done. I went d' limit but I got peace now, thank God!"

A tall, moderately well-dressed man with a mass of black curly hair moved to a front seat. There was great weariness in his voice and a despairing look on his face as he said, "I'm tired of life; there's nothing in it." He moved over to the prayer bench, and with tears cried out, "Oh Nancy". He almost flung himself down and then with a sobbing, broken prayer, he lay apparently exhausted. Later on he told of the downward course through gambling and liquor until the patient, faithful wife could no longer bear the strain. Poor Nancy had

been buried among the hills of her New Hampshire home.

A worker put his arm around the shoulders of the remorseful man, and prayed simply and fervently for all who were kneeling at the bench. "Oh, Father, You know all about them. They have served Satan most of their lives, but You won't turn them away. You've never turned one away Lord. You can save them! Please save them from evil this very night, dear Lord: O Lord, some of them are nigh falling, but you held up Peter when he was on the water, hold up these poor souls till they are right inside the glory with You dear Lord. Amen, Amen."

One by one the "all-nighters" passed into a dimly-lighted, unfurnished hall. Men had already covered one half the floor space. Some spread out a newspaper, others rolled up a coat for a pillow. One man had excelsior all over his coat. Evidently he had been trying to sleep in a packing-box. Snores mingled with groans and sighs. My companion and I crumpled up newspapers and placed them behind our heads as we sat against the wall. "Keep hold of your hat, sir. Some of them wouldn't mind exchanging their own for yours. I used to sleep like these boys if I could get in; some nights there isn't a vacant spot. Lots of times I slept on the steps of a warehouse or in a dark alley-way where the cops couldn't see me. The superintendent lets me look after people like you who want to see the district and how the people live. Every bit of money I get that way helps till I can get a steady job. I've been saved two months, but I can't yet live with my wife and little children."

"Why can't you?" asked the visitor. "Well, you see, the way I've treated them makes them think I'm

faking. They don't believe the change is genuine. Oh, it's hard, but I'm doing my best alone until they will believe in me. I've sent a bit of money three times, but I can't get hold of much yet."

Several times the whispered conversation was interrupted by later arrivals, some of whom staggered dangerously near us. The man's story of his early married days as a telegraph operator and then the downfall was full of pathos and sometimes horror. The poor wife had been forced to go out and earn a living for herself and little children, and she simply dared not have her meagre earnings endangered by the presence of a non-working and perhaps drinking husband.

The night wore on and we saw faces and heard utterances that revealed sore tragedies. Some were so ragged and dirty and bruised and bloated that they seemed to be losing all semblance of a man.

Many were wearing clothes they had found in garbage barrels. Occasionally a man would be wearing two coats, one of which he would be ready to trade for a shirt, if one less ragged and dirty than his own could be located. In the semi-darkness we saw one or two such exchanges.

Quite a few poor chaps were obviously not belonging to the regular "rounders" class. They were just unfortunate, and having become stranded, had drifted helplessly with the homeless crowd to the places where there is at least a floor and a roof and some touch of welcome. Perhaps the majority of our companions that night were men who were more concerned with getting a drink than with anything else. They were habitual drinkers of such poisonous stuff as their limited means permitted. Gradually their sensibilities had become numbed. A sort of semi-oblivion to the past seems to

have settled upon them and they have no desires for the future. "I'm just a bum," said one, "and I guess I'll never be anything else." How they live is a mystery, but my guide said there were many of the saloons or speak-easies where free sandwiches or stews were given out at certain specified hours, and by occasionally buying a drink such men had a claim on these free lunches. "They won't work many hours even if you get them a job. As soon as they know there is a dollar or two coming to them it is too much of a temptation and they draw their pay and drink till it's gone."

Occasionally we moved out into the narrow street to get a breath of fresher air. By no stretch of imagination could it be called fresh, but it was better than inside. Between two and three o'clock, as we reached the sidewalk for the third time, we ran into a staggering group from a nearby cellar resort. The jingle of a cracked piano, the twanging of cheap banjos, and the wheezy notes of an accordeon indicated that the revelry was still going on. A few street women with painted, hideous faces were standing near the cellar entrance.

It was in an adjoining alley that a few nights earlier the police had found a poor creature in a lifeless heap. She had once been comely but careless, and drifted from the uptown gilded palaces to lower and still lower dens of iniquity. Penniless and forsaken, forsaken even by those who had wrought her ruin, half-starved and heart-broken, her poor, sin-marred body could no longer withstand the ravages of evil-living followed by months of hunger and homelessness. She had dropped dead as she was dragging herself, she scarcely knew whither. Two days she lay unidentified in the morgue, and then in a rough box she was laid beneath the sod in a dis-honoured portion of the Potter's field.

In the police station nearby there was pinned on the wall a dirty card that had been found in the clothing of this unidentified outcast. There was nothing but the dirty rags that covered her and the soiled card. It bore four verses:

On the street, on the street,  
To and fro with weary feet;  
Aching heart and aching head;  
Homeless, lacking daily bread;  
Lost to friends, and joy, and name,  
Sold to sorrow, sin, and shame:  
Ruined, wretched, lone, forlorn;  
Weak and wan, with weary feet,  
Still I wander on the street!

On the street, on the street,  
Midnight finds my straying feet;  
Hark the sound of pealing bells,  
Oh, the tales their music tells!  
Happy hours forever gone;  
Happy childhood, peaceful home—  
Then a mother on me smiled,  
Then a father owned his child—  
Vanish, mocking visions sweet!  
Still I wander on the street.

On the street, on the street,  
Whither tend my wandering feet?  
Love and hope and joy are dead—  
Not a place to lay my head;  
Every door against me sealed—  
Hospital and Potter's Field,  
These stand open!—wider yet  
Swings perdition's yawning gate,  
Thither tend my wandering feet,  
On the street, on the street.

*On the street, on the street,  
Might I here a Saviour meet!  
From the blessed far off years,  
Comes the story of her tears,  
Whose sad heart with sorrow broke,  
Heard the words of love He spoke,  
Heard Him bid her anguish cease,  
Heard Him whisper, "Go in peace!"  
Oh, that I might kiss His feet,  
On the street, on the street.*

We stood in the shadows for a moment or two watching these defiled creatures who were sold to sin and shame. Their coarse and blasphemous language made us tremble.

A man from the staggering group mentioned lurched towards us. "How's chances, boys?" he asked in a husky voice. "Not much room left" was the reply, "but maybe you can get a corner if you don't stretch too far." "Room with a bath and sun parlor," said the man, with a hoarse laugh. He was piloted to the space we had left. As we passed along the lighted hall, the writer could not be otherwise than affected as he glanced at his face. He could scarcely be more than thirty, and in spite of his condition there were indications of different days. Was it any use talking to a man in such a condition and at such a time?

"Alright, buddy," called the guide, "walk easy now —along this way—right here. Don't stretch too far." With a groan the wanderer tried to get into a comfortable position. In a moment or two he sat up and then crossed his arms just below his knees. The visitor sat near to him. He wanted to talk to him but he scarcely knew what to say. How appalling was the need of all these poor, broken, sin-soiled, guilt-laden, disfigured men. One wondered if Charles Wesley had been look-

ing on such a spoiled mass of humanity when he wrote the stanza—

"Outcasts of men, to you I call,  
    Harlots, and publicans, and thieves!  
    He spreads His arms to embrace you all;  
    Sinners alone His grace receives;  
    No need of Him the righteous have,  
    He came the lost to seek and save."

Something seemed to say to the visitor—"sing quietly". He had often done unusual things, but to start singing in a semi-darkened room at three a.m., where men lay drunk, half-drunk, and sobering up in sleep seemed about the most imaginably inappropriate time and place.

But the words were not altogether his and he could not keep from quietly singing: "Oh could I see you now, my boy". The voice was a bit unsteady, and as he sang he felt the hand of his guide-companion lightly pressing on his shoulder as if to remind him of the inopportune time for singing. But the next line simply would come—"As fair as in olden time". The hands that were crossed around the knees were released and the newcomer pushed himself a bit nearer to the singer. The stanza was completed; then the refrain. As the refrain was quietly continued a hand was stretched out to the singer's knee and a head followed the hand. The body was trembling and tears were flowing.

A friendly, sympathetic hand was placed on his shoulder but no word was spoken. In a few minutes he wearily struggled to his feet. All the joviality that he had manifested on entering had disappeared, and with head bent he started for the street. We walked alongside of him. "Better not go yet; maybe we can help you; maybe God can help you." "Not me!" was

the only reply. His hands were wiping away a tear or two. Once more he spoke. "Oh, hell! better let me get out of this. It's too late now. I'm done for. I—was—brought—up—right, but—I've gone the pace and if any poor devil has paid the price, I'm the duffer." He stood silent a moment and then moved on. "I'm off; let me get out." Pushing aside our protesting hands he went out into the early dawn.

"There are lots of them like that," said the guide, "but maybe he'll come back. Some fellows like him curse the place and everybody in it, and say they'll never set foot inside it again, but by and by they turn up and a lot of 'em get set on their feet, mind you. You bet, they can produce the goods here, all right. I heard the Superintendent say on Sunday night that nobody sinks so far down but the Hand that was crucified can reach him, and the Superintendent knows about that if anybody does."

Just before daylight we lay down on stretchers that had been reserved for us elsewhere, and a couple of hours later went back to see how the "boys" were getting along. Some were gone—out to continue the weary search for a job—others to solicit a drink or a meal. Some were still sleeping. Some were painfully trying to get "limbered up". A few were talkative and were even joking with their companions in privation. A few minutes later and the orders were given for all to move on. Poor homeless drifters!

On his next visit three years later, the writer learned that his guide had been right. The man who had gone sobbing, out into the early dawn, did return. After weeks of prayerful effort, coupled with many disappointments, they had got him "on his feet". The "ever-lasting mercy" had prevailed. It seems he had drifted

to the great city that his identity might be lost. His home and friends were fifteen hundred miles away, and he could not be persuaded to get in touch with them. "Not yet," was his constant reply to the Superintendent's appeal. "Not yet; maybe in a year! God helping me, I'll be in shape by then, but I've got lots of things to straighten out first, and when I go back I'll go back a gentleman. I've disgraced them all and I'm not going back just to have them help me get out of the hole. Not yet! not yet!"

Eight months later he left the great city, and with a reformed criminal—Tom Rolton—set his face towards a far-west mining camp where a former companion had promised them good positions.

A month after his arrival he was in one of the mine buildings when a terrific explosion took place. His companions were a considerable distance below. They hastened up the trail to the scene of the disaster to find that their chum was dangerously hurt. As quickly and carefully as possible they got him down to the company's Club House, where all such cases were given attention. Unfortunately the doctor was thirty miles away on consultation and there was no medical attention immediately available.

As they stood alongside of their injured chum, he looked up and said quietly, "I'm dying boys, pray for me." "I can't", said the older one of the two. "I've never prayed in my life: anyway we don't want you to leave us, Bob." "Tom," said the dying man, as his eyes turned to his other pal, "you pray for me. I need it badly right now. Be—quick—Tom,—I'll soon—be—gone."

Tom hesitated, and then in a broken voice began a

prayer his mother had once taught him. "Now I lay me down to sleep." The dying man looked comforted, and slowly repeated the petition line by line as it was uttered. "Now—I—lay—me down", and so on through the remaining lines. With the last words uttered, "I pray the Lord my soul to keep", his life went out. Tom and Fred, kneeling on both sides of the bed, put down their heads and sobbed like children over the loss of their pal.

They made the rough coffin and dug the grave themselves. They buried him on the top of the mountain away from the gloom and noise. A little cairn of rocks supported a board on which was their simple tribute—"Bob, a good Pal". Tom later on discovered his dead friend's home address and wrote to the old mother, who was his only relative still living. He sent back Bob's few personal belongings, and told her that some day he would go and see her, although just then there seemed little chance of his doing it. After a miraculous escape from death and a deeper religious experience, he felt he should go, but he did not have the money. It was over two years before he could manage the trip.

When at last the long journey was accomplished and he stood on the platform of a little village station, he inquired if Mrs. Masnert still lived there. He was pointed to an attractive, flower-surrounded, little bungalow. Somewhat hesitatingly he made his way through the garden to where an old woman was sitting with Bible and prayer book on her knees. He told her who he was and reminded her of the letters he had written.

Eagerly she listened to every word of the story of Bob's death and burial. Tom thought there was nothing that would cheer her in the narration, but she raised her wrinkled old hands and said, with upward gaze,

"Thank God, oh thank God! If my Bob said 'I pray the Lord my soul to keep', the good Lord will do it. He don't go back on a prayer like that, bless His dear Name!"

Tom told her that if she wished he would gather up the remains and bring them back to be buried near home, but the old mother replied, "No, no, thank you kindly: it won't be very long now before I shall be with my boy and his dear father—not very long." The old head was bent forward as she said, in a voice that expressed the comfort her bereaved old heart had received, "'I pray the Lord my soul to keep'; that's what my Bobbie said, and the good Lord will do it, yes, He will do it!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

## The Tepees of the Barren North

ONE of the privileges of the writer's work has been the contact made with the comparatively unknown but great souls that toil in the regions far from the highways of commerce. Some of these have journeyed over trails travelled only by the feet of man and dog. No wheels have ever revolved over those lonely stretches of rock and bush. Trains and automobiles are hundreds of miles away; scores of lakes and rivers must be paddled, or long and weary journeys by dog-sleigh must be made to reach the little far north encampments of those who live by trapping and fishing. But the missionary knows that these isolated tribes, often battling against Nature's stormy elements for a scanty livelihood, are included in the world which God so loved. So the encampment comes to have its humble place of worship and its still more humble rectory or manse that becomes a radiant centre of helpfulness in every hour of need. Leader, counsellor, physician, nurse, mediator, fellow-laborer in daily toils, carpenter and builder, teacher of many subjects; pastor, preacher, judge, and even undertaker—some of the missionaries and their wives were all these things and more—and they counted it a joy, for they could add, "If by any means we might save some."

Through the generosity of interested friends, the radio will be made increasingly available for these brave ambassadors of the Cross who have left all for His sake. Yet the lack of the intimacies and fellowship of kindred spirits must still be a very great loss.

A visit from an outsider interested in the work of

Christ's kingdom means much. One isolated missionary said after such a visit, and in a tone of grateful pathos that will not soon be forgotten, "Goodbye; until you came in and gave us a lift, we thought nobody knew and nobody cared but God."

The loneliness of some of the Church's messengers in the far north may be realized if I quote from a letter that lies on my desk, and which was received the day before these lines were commenced. It bears the date 18th June, and acknowledges a small parcel of books that were sent as a Christmas gift. They had been seven months on the way. The missionary says, "Mail has been very uncertain and irregular. We receive it not oftener than four times a year. If the load to be brought in is too heavy, it may happen that the most important packages are left behind for a more convenient season. After the train has brought it to the end of the steel, it is transferred to slow-travelling river freighters and thence to canoes and dog-sledges. Two years ago an entire mail was lost through an air-hole in the ice. Fortunately the Indians and four of the 'huskies' escaped drowning. Some of our Christmas packages are still on the way, and some calendars, that I felt would be exceedingly educative for our younger Indians, and which were ordered a year ago, have not yet arrived. The next dog-train will be late in August!"

"Can you imagine the excitement caused by the arrival of mail after four months without one word of news from the world outside! We hurriedly sort the letters, selecting those we deem most important, and then open them in order of postmarks, so as to read them in proper sequence. We forget all about meals or other things, and when we are through reading our letters, we are often pretty quiet and maybe a bit home-

sick. Sometimes we learn of dear friends who have passed on and whose faces we shall see no more down here. But there is always some joyous news. Some letters, however, are opened with trembling hands, for what may not have happened during four or five months!

"The tribes here are usually cheered by our mail. They have none of their own. Those texts and picture cards which you sent pleased them greatly. They are very religious, and delight in services: although I have six meetings each week, they would willingly attend more. You see we have no counter attractions up here to interfere with services, except the fishing and trapping and hunting, which sometimes take the men far afield."

From a bulky package of this missionary's home letters we take a few extracts. The record is of events subsequent to the railway and riverboat journey. It starts where the missionary, with his wife and family, was facing the desolate and lonely miles that had to be wearily travelled ere he reached his lowly mission buildings. Most of what follows was written during the long canoe trip.

"It is a bit hard on the two children but they have been wonderfully good. Poor little kiddies; I wish you could see them as they are huddled among the baggage day after day. Sometimes they are so wearied with their unchanging and uncomfortable positions in the canoe, that we notice the tears trickling down their cheeks, but they scarcely ever complain. Once in a while a tired little voice will ask, 'Will we soon be there, daddy?' I have scarcely the heart to answer that it must be three or four weeks before we can sleep under any cover but our tiny tent.

"Just now the weather is fine and we are on the shore of Great Spirit Lake. I am pencilling this with a convenient rock as my writing desk. . . . We dare not delay our journey, and must continue to press on even during rainstorms, and, as we used to sing in college days, 'There is no place to go but out', anyway. The children keep themselves under the tarpaulin as best they can during the storms, and Billy sometimes helps by baling out the canoe. We cannot avoid shipping water once in a while, and when the rains are heavy, we have to bale or sponge constantly.

"Then as night falls there is a desperate rush to put up the tent on the best bit of ground available. Our things get terribly rain-soaked and it is not easy to amuse and cheer the youngsters amidst such discomforts. The mosquitoes and black-flies are in almost unbelievable swarms in these lonely woods and swamps, and they are positively vicious when human blood is available. When we are portaging and need both hands to hang on to canoes or packs, they are simply maddening in their unceasing torture. Sometimes we are compelled to drop our baggage and almost fight for our lives, only to be attacked the more viciously as soon as we again shoulder our load. We are often bespattered with blood. The children's faces and necks are a pathetic sight, and we have discovered nothing to ward off the wretched little black-flies. A meal loses much of its enjoyment because we have to be continuously slapping at these 'dirty brutes', as Billy terms them. When we get well out into the lake they disappear, so you may be sure we lose no time in 'launching out into the deep.'

"But it is a slow method of travel. So few ever journey these lonely ways that a former landing-place

is not always easy to locate on account of the weeds and scrubby growth that have covered the spot in the interval. Sometimes we have to alight in deep mud. Having landed, we take our belongings out of the canoes and place them on the driest spot of ground we can find, as it would be impossible to drag a loaded canoe through the bush.

"When the unloading is finished, we draw the canoe from the water, and turning it bottom up, let one of the Indians get underneath it. With his head and shoulders inside he starts for the next lake. Sometimes the underbrush and small trees make these portages desperately hard work. Twigs and branches have an exasperating way of catching in the thwarts of the canoe and offer stubborn resistance to progress. Only those who have had to journey by rowing or paddling or on foot day after day can understand the wearying aggravations of the journey. They say that the old Bishop of Alaska swears by proxy. There is a story that when he goes mushing over the snowy wastes, he often gets extremely tired, cold and hungry, and wants very much to swear; but he never forgets that he is a bishop. However, he has a way out. He waylays the first man he meets and asks him how the trail is. The man invariably replies that the trail is the blankety-blankest trail that he ever saw. The bishop smiles, sighs, asks him to repeat it, then says 'amen' and plods on.

"I'm afraid that's how I feel when we are portaging through a swampy bush with a tangled mass of growth that not infrequently causes me to stumble and fall. Several trips are necessary to bring up the food supplies, tents and blankets. Often it is many hours before the canoes are re-loaded, and even the Indians, who are accustomed to such work, get terribly tired. But we are

on the King's Business! Our guides have seemed interested in our morning devotions, and at night they join in singing the great old hymns of the Church, so we feel we are doing a bit for Him even on our journey.

"Last night we pitched our tent on a little island that was nicely wooded and had a lovely beach. The sunset was glorious. Quiet? For scores of miles in every direction there were no humans but ourselves to disturb the absolute silence. Our oldest guide, Tom Tauchie, is one of the most experienced 'dog-mushers' of the whole north. He has probably handled more trappers' supplies than any other Indian in Canada. There is not much old Tom does not know about fishing and trapping and wild life in general. His brownish-red old face and body are scarred and seamed through conflicts with bears and wolves, and through exposure and hardships. He has been caught in storms when the snow-drifted bush would have been a death trap to any but the most unflinchingly courageous and enduring. Old Tom could tell some great stories. I asked him once about a terrific foot-long scar he has down his forearm. After a good deal of questioning I discovered that he had slipped on a fallen tree and had rolled right on top of a bear. When the conflict had ended and the bear lay stabbed to death by Tom's knife, the old trapper was covered with blood from a score of gaping wounds. In spite of his weakness, he had applied such first aid as the Indian knows and had plunged and struggled and staggered back to his tepee, where he lay for two weeks in a battle with death. Others had located the bear's carcass the next day and Tom had bear soup and steak during his convalescence, so that the bear that had given him such a terrible mauling during its life helped to nourish him after its death.

"Last night was the sort of night one might have expected Tom to become reminiscent, but he was not inclined to tell of his exploits. He sat on a rock as though enraptured by the beauty of the earth around us. It was one of the most impressive and gorgeous sunsets that I have ever seen. What pictures the great Creator can paint on the wall of the western sky! We gazed at the crimson glories as we sang 'Day is dying in the West', and I interpreted some of the lines that were not clear to Tom. He became a bit talkative after I had read a few verses of the Bible. Only fifty miles away his father and mother had lived for forty years. Their tepee poles were standing, nearly twenty years after they had departed to their happy hunting grounds, and he promised to show us the spot. 'May be tomorrow —may be longer. Tree (three) bad portage—take long time. Good trout eef we have good luck and make Big Chief Island. Ah! Good trout supper.' As Tom reached over and touched my little pocket Bible, he continued very seriously. 'My father very good man —him carry book—Great Spirit book—cold day, hot day, all time him read. White man give him book long time ago. My—what you call him?—grandfather, him no see the book. Him never read about Great Spirit. No, him never know.'

"Thank God we are able to tell so many of these tribes about the Saviour. May the day soon come when no one shall be able to say 'him never know'.

"I think we all lay down for the night's rest overawed by what we had seen of Our Father's handiwork. My wife recalled our friend R's words that there was no guest-room like God's great outdoors on a moonlight night, especially in such solitude as we often find ourselves. It all seemed part of an eternal glory.

"Late one afternoon, Tom let out an agreeable sort of grunt and, as we rounded a little island, pointed with his paddle to where we saw smoke rising from a clearance in the bush. 'Hudson Bay, Ugh'. It was the most welcome sight that our six weeks' canoe trip had revealed—the Hudson Bay Post—behind which lay the Indian houses and numerous tents and tepees. Mary asked if we should be in a 'really' bed tonight, and Billy wondered if he could buy some candy with some of your gift-money he still has left."

From a personal letter written a year later, there are reminders of our earlier associations with this courageous missionary in another remote field two thousand miles away from his present location.

"Do you remember the time you and I slept in the old Blackfoot Chief's tepee in Alberta? Have you ever seen such wizened old squaws as those two who squatted over the fire? What an unpleasantly interested face you had when they started to feed the Chief! Do you remember how they selected the choicest bits of the meat they had roasted before the fire and, setting it before him, one wife sat on one side of him and one on the other, and after masticating a mouthful, they would pass it between his lips? Between the two of them they kept him well supplied, and all he did was to bend over a bowl occasionally and take a spoonful of oil or some concoction. I remember it spoiled your appetite for the next twenty-four hours, and you were internally uncomfortable every time you thought of it.

"Didn't we have a night of it beneath those filthy greasy old blankets? But I often get worse accommodation and more undesirable company up here. I remember you once told me after you had had a winter in occupying over a hundred different rooms that you felt

if the devil ever invented anything especially for preachers it was the average spare-room in the outlying districts. I suppose because it is occupied so seldom they think it unnecessary to provide it with any heat. Like you I've often been able to wipe a handful of frost or moisture off the wallpaper. But up here there are neither walls nor wallpaper.

"Last month I made a seven-day canoe trip to a little encampment that has wanted me to visit them for some months. It was the hardest trip I have ever had and we were in real danger of losing all our stuff on Windy Lake. We struck a bad snag in fairly deep water. We could not stop the leak. Only by hard paddling and then jumping into the water as soon as we could touch bottom were we able to make shore in safety. We then had to support the canoe to keep it from sinking, but we managed to make a landing. Fortunately, Kokwesue had some pitch, and soon patched the hole so that we could continue our journey. The nights were almost unendurable. To sleep with any ventilation meant torture from flies and mosquitoes, and as we had only one little tent, you may imagine the odorous suffocation I had to endure with three Indians under a canvas that was made mosquito-proof. In sheer desperation, I broke my imprisonment twice, much to the displeasure of my bed-fellows, but it was a case of from frying pan into the fire. It was a choice between suffocating, foul air and thousands of winged pests.

"At last the tiring journey was at an end and it really was great to get the welcome I did when I reached the settlement. The entire tribe shook my hands in a hearty manner, and for the next few days there were numerous pow-wows with their accompanying noise and confusion and feasting and speech-making. There

was only one house in the place. The occupant moved into a tepee so that I might have sole possession of what up here is a palatial dwelling. The furnishings consisted of a rough-hewn table, a stove, and a box to sit upon, all of which had evidently been cleaned for the new tenant. They added some blankets to my own, and, with some mosquito netting as partial protection, I was quite comfortable sleeping on the floor.

"It is not often I can be housed alone on such visits, although I greatly prefer it. So many of the people are diseased, and not infrequently I have had to stay where there have been the most aggravated forms of tuberculosis and even venereal troubles. I am thankful to say there is very little of the latter up here. You may imagine what it means to be 'herded' (that is the most appropriate word) with people covered with vice-caused diseases. The Indian is always hospitable, perhaps his very improvidence tends in that direction. He will feed his friends, even though he must go hungry the next day. Sometimes I have curbed a ravenous appetite, fearing that if I took all I desired, the little children would go hungry, for there are times when it is a struggle for daily bread.

"Of course I was anxious to get at my work, for the time was short. So many were sick and unattended, and others were just wretched in their dirt and ignorance and poverty. When they get sick, with few exceptions, they seem to become absolutely despondent and, giving up every ray of hope, lie down expecting to die.

"A little log church had been erected a few weeks before. The roof was entirely of bark from the surrounding trees, and they had fixed the interior quite nicely considering the material and tools available. We had good services and they sang well. I announced

after one morning service that I should visit the afflicted folks during the rest of the day. Then I also spoke outside of one of the tepees, and most of those who were well gathered around me. The flaps of the tents where the sick lay were lifted, and I think God gave me freedom of expression, for I had no difficulty with the language. I am sure His blessed Spirit brought home to many of these degraded folk a message of salvation and comfort. How they did enjoy the singing! I clasped the hand or touched the forehead of the afflicted as I knelt on the ground beside them, and tried to bring a personal word to each one. Some of their yearning eyes seemed to pierce to my very soul. Lying there uncared for, they would cling to my hand and gaze into my face with a look that meant they were longing for something, they scarcely knew what, but which I knew only One could supply.

"I was rather amused at a remark Kokwesue made as we walked together from the service yesterday. My sermon had been on the patience of God. As you know, the Indian woman is virtually a slave and has no claim on her husband's love and care. Among certain tribes, however, will be found some who, as occasion requires, can assert their feminine rights very vigorously. Evidently there was one such here. We were passing a tepee where, unseen by us, a squaw was pitching into her husband. His posture rather suggested that he was 'henpecked'. She was evidently showing him no mercy. Kokwesue quietly remarked, 'Him need a lot of what you preach about this morning'.

"Kokwesue is a very decent chap, and in genuine goodness some of these men would compare favorably with any of the church folk among whom you work. Again and again I have heard white people say 'the

only good Indian is a dead one'. I wonder where you will find a more forgiving and unselfish action than the following true incident reveals.

"A year ago, as I was leaving home for a week or two, I met a big Indian on the trail, Peter Patias by name. I had often noticed Peter in church, although he did not belong to our encampment. His responses in the service were always fervent. As we met he said, 'Well, I am in trouble today.' 'What is the matter, Peter?' 'My wife wants to come back to me.' I was not aware that he had a wife, so I asked him where she was. He said that she lived at T— Lake, and that she was paralyzed on one side and had a 'bad, bad disease'. The Government's Indian Department had been looking after her for some time, but she had written asking him if he would take her back and forgive her. She said if he would do so, she would be saved, if not, she would go to hell. I asked him how long she had been away. 'Twenty-three years,' was the quiet reply. 'Why did she leave you, Peter?' There was real sadness in his voice—'She go off with another man. I followed them far, far, and tell her all I would do if she would come back, but she say 'No'. So then I ask her to shake hands and we both forgive. I said I was sorry if I had not been good to her, for I meant to be. But she would not look at me. She like other man better.'

"I told him that she certainly had no claim on him if she had deserted him after all that, and that he might not now be able to take care of her in her terrible condition. She would be a tremendous burden and it might be better to leave her where she was. If he wished, he could send her a monthly gift. Would not that do?

"'Yes, I know,' said Peter, 'but she says if I forgive

her and take her back she will be saved, if not, she will be lost. I couldn't let her be lost, could I? I am afraid I would be much blame if she was not saved.'

"I told him that she could be saved through faith and repentance where she was and that she need not be lost. A few weeks later, I saw him buying some woman's apparel at the 'Post'. I talked to him and discovered that he had brought her back to his shack; brought back the woman who had left him twenty-three years before; brought her back paralyzed and with a 'bad, bad disease', to be only a burden to him. But Peter could not let her be lost. I looked after the poorly clad and illiterate old man as he walked away. His bent head was swaying slowly as if he were still saying 'I couldn't let her be lost, could I?' Are there many white men who would have done such a forgiving and self-sacrificing deed?"

There are many other items of interest in those diary-letters. Some too personal for any eyes but the mother's, for whom they were intended. A spirit of yearning to be of help is manifested throughout. The sore need of the consolation and moral uplift that only the Word of God can bring presses heavily upon him. Yet he would choose no other field of service, and as these words are written he is still giving his life to the Indians of the frozen north. At the end of life's little day, it will be true of him, in Goldsmith's words:

*"Remote from towns he ran his godly race,  
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place.  
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,  
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise."*

In the letters referred to he tells of the death of a young brave a week before his own arrival at the en-

campment. A few hours of sickness and then death. One evening as the missionary was walking near the lake shore, he heard the pathetic tones of the bereaved old Chief and his blanket-clad squaw. They were kneeling on the sand facing the setting sun, and, with hands now clasped and now stretched in piteous appeal toward the fiery splendors on the horizon, they were wailing out their grief to the Sun God. Some tribes pray only to the great Evil Spirit and make such sacrifices as shall appease his wrath. They feel it quite unnecessary to pray to the Good Spirit. He is kind and would not hurt them in any case. But this old couple believed in the Great Spirit Who was somewhere in those far-off regions where the sun goes down. They believed, too, in the lesser spirits that manifest themselves in storm and lake and river and mountains. The old couple made a pathetic picture, and one was reminded of Tennyson's words:

*"An infant crying in the night,  
An infant crying for the light,  
And with no language but a cry."*

Not until the sun had disappeared did they rise from their knees and dejectedly drag themselves back to their lonely tepee. The missionary visited them several times during the following days and looked into their sad faces and told them of the Divine Comforter, but they shook their grief-bowed heads and kept crying out for their brave young chieftain to return.

Half an hour after their return from the lake shore, the call for family worship was given (the call-gong being a tin plate and a knife). Several from nearby tepees gathered into the encampment's guest room.

There was a great yearning in the missionary's voice as he led them in singing.

*"Once more 'tis eventide, and we,  
Oppressed with various ills, draw near."*

The bereaved old Chief and his squaw were still despondently huddled in their lonely tepee, but perhaps the song-prayer that had them especially in mind would not be unanswered.

*"Hear in this solemn evening hour  
And in Thy mercy heal us all."*

## CHAPTER XIV.

### Pigs Vacate in Favour of Preacher

THE snapshot of the little group that greeted us as we approached the rudely-constructed prairie dwelling in the late afternoon of an August day lies before me. The husband and wife are standing on either side of the narrow doorway looking with interest at the approaching strangers. Visitors were few and seldom in that remote district which, less than a year before, had been opened to a number of non-Anglo-Saxons. Two timid children are clinging to the mother's skirt of flour sacking. The father, in much-patched clothing and with trousers made out of sacks, is holding a baby whose little hand is outstretched in an effort to grasp mother's head-dress; the last-named being the only distinctive reminder of the non-Anglo-Saxon country from which she came. A few chickens are in the foreground and two others may be seen just inside the shack. The snout of a pig partly hidden under the table also reveals the liberty accorded to the livestock the family possesses.

The poplar poles of which the house is built protrude irregularly from sides and roof, and the clay between them shows how hurriedly and roughly the place had been put up by these two strangers within our gates. Poles are wired together over the carelessly thatched roof to keep the loosely placed straw from blowing away.

The practically penniless family had reached their prairie destination in the early spring, and the main thing was to get a roof of some kind over their heads. With no knowledge of Canadian conditions, and know-

ing nothing of the English language, they had started in to make a home far away from friends, but also, thank God, far away from a galling oppression they had for years endured. They had once seen their fellow-worshippers in the little village across the sea shot down within the church walls, verifying a similar story told elsewhere in this book. They had watched from a distance the oil-sprinkled bodies make part of the blaze that destroyed the building that was the centre of religious interest. Persecution and hard toil and conditions of extreme poverty had been their lot from childhood.

And now freedom and the open prairie and one hundred and sixty acres that ere long they could call their very own! It was like entering a beautiful and peaceful harbour after a storm in which all hope had been abandoned.

Despite the fact that they had already been victimized by unscrupulous agents and salesmen, they were hopeful and thankful. Canada was to them a goodly heritage and the lines had fallen unto them in pleasant places.

The interpreter tells them of our Mission. For three months we had tramped from dwelling to dwelling throughout that foreign colony, to let them know the Church's interest in them, and to preach and sing and tell the Gospel story. They listen, interrupting with glad ejaculations only. The man has learned a little English. His face is full of smiles as he says: "You do us great big—vat you call him? honour, yes, honour. Ve not can tank you all in our hearts. You tell us God! Dat good! We tank you."

The usual chunks of black bread are on the table and a saucer of salt with a few onions show that the

evening meal is about ready. There is the all-pervading and ever-present smell of cabbage soup, some of which must be re-warmed for the visitors. It is their main fare and is on special occasions enriched by a scrap of meat. The long-boiled black tea completes the bill of fare.

The only ventilation for the two little rooms is the doorway through which we and a few hundred flies have entered. The two tiny windows are embedded in the clay and are not made to open. The idea of ventilation having any value is to them very strange, and makes no appeal whatever. In the winter-time, with cabbage soup a dozen times a week, and other unmentionable additions to the variety of smells, the atmosphere of such a dwelling is vile beyond any description that is permitted in a Christian's vocabulary.

A corner of the "other room" was given the visitors for the night. "They've been awful good to you," whispers the interpreter, "they put the pigs outdoors to give you more room." The flies and insects had unfortunately not departed with the pigs and like Paul, "we wished for the day". And its coming was not long delayed, for very early in the morning the hard-working couple were ready for the day's toil. As some of the provisions were in boxes under our roughly made bedstead it was necessary that the pantry be available before breakfast could be prepared. In such abodes the wife relieved of anything that could be called house-keeping, except very occasionally, is glad to labour alongside of the husband. Day after day married couples might be seen breaking the virgin soil of the Saskatchewan prairies. Many of these women are quite as good at field work as the men. Not infrequently the mother has her baby with her. A crude hammock

hangs by spiral springs from the plough handles, and the baby has rather a rough journey as the oxen plod along "turning the stubborn clay to fruit." Here and there a hidden boulder gives the baby an unpleasant jolt.

Looking for a place to get a morning wash, the preacher stood for a moment watching a young pig that was nosing around in a tub containing a little water. It was one of a litter of five that had been born in the room we had just vacated, a room that furnished every facility for dying. Indeed, three of the litter had died —we could not blame them for that—but two had, as the physicians say of humans, "built up a toleration", and had overcome all obstacles and gave promise of reaching marketable days. The host came over to where the preacher stood. He was anxious to prevent any misunderstanding.

"Ve not drink dat vater de pig in!"

"No?"

"Oh, no, no! de water ve drink is in de vagon; ve get it from de slough. No, no, dat vater de pig is in ve chust keep to vash de dishes." We then went in to enjoy our breakfast.

At the close of the simple meal all joined in some of the familiar hymns of the homeland. Scripture reading and a brief exposition followed, and an appeal was made urging them to stand fast in the faith. The interpreter prays in their own tongue and the man of the house adds a few broken petitions. Commending one another to God we shoulder our bundles and once more set out across the exhilarating expanses of the prairie. The little group is again around the doorway. The yoked oxen are standing ready for the day's work. As

the distance between us increases, our host calls out in his native tongue "Peace be with you! Peace be with you!" The departing guests reply "And with you, my brother."

We leave them on yonder prairie as part of a nation in the making, with a prayer that His Church shall not fail them, and that the Gospel may do its perfect work. Their standards of living in the distant land had been so different, and such subjects as sanitation and hygiene were quite unknown to them, so that their education even along purely physical lines is necessarily slow.

Continuing our daily tramps, opportunity often presented itself for a fifteen or twenty minutes ministry beneath the blue sky. Oxen would be halted while husband and wife stood reverently alongside of the plough or "stone boat" and with bared heads listened to the first Gospel message they had heard in the new land.

Occasionally a number of families would come together for a day of worship. Few had any means of conveyance, and most of those attending walked long distances, some starting as early as five o'clock in the morning. From eight o'clock until sundown, with an hour's respite at noon, they eagerly listened, and as opportunity was given, eagerly questioned.

After a communion service, during which they had stood for two hours, believing it to be more reverent to stand than to sit, the preacher said through the interpreter that he was sorry they had been standing so long. "Tell him," said one, "that we have stood for the devil more than two hours a good many times. We are glad to stand for God two hours."

Some of the new settlers we met constitute a tremendous problem. They had failed in the homeland

and they would fail anywhere unless reformed. They were a menace to the life of the community. As a certain Senator said very inelegantly a few years ago, "America is in danger of becoming the spittoon for Southern Europe", and he pointed out the fact that in addition to a very low morality, thirty to forty per cent. of these particular immigrants over fifteen years of age could not on arrival at American ports read a word, even of their own language. Since the Senator uttered his warning words, the Governments of the United States and Canada have made the regulations for admission to their respective countries much more rigid. It should be remembered, however, that there are many non-Anglo-Saxons who have become a real asset in Canadian life, and that there are many more in far-off lands who have never had a chance to live decently and who would likewise, if permitted, give a good account of themselves in an unfettered Christian land.

We have one-third of all the land in the British Empire and vast tracts still unoccupied. May our hearts be large enough to provide a safe and happy refuge for worthy people, carefully and wisely selected, who seek a brighter, freer life than has been possible for them elsewhere.

## CHAPTER XV.

### In the Heart of the Rockies

“**S**PEND at least a Sunday with us before you return East, and give us an afternoon and an evening service” wrote a minister-evangelist from a mountain mining town.

Late on Saturday night the little Manse was entered, and a welcome such as only an isolated missionary could give made the visitor thankful that he had accepted the invitation. The manifold duties of the Sabbath Day meant early rising, and the impressions of that day from its dawn till its close are still vivid. The scene from the window of the humble study was magnificent. The sentinel pines occupied the foothills, while in their silent glory the bare, grey, rocky giants stood in the background—bare except for the snow-filled clefts and gulleys. The sky was almost cloudless, and the western range of mountains were clothed in a transparent garment of crimson. In the quiet of the early Sabbath morn all nature seemed to be co-operating to make the Sabbath a day of calm and gladness.

The missionary did his “chores”, and then went over to the church to see that the fire was making satisfactory progress; then half an hour was given to assisting the brave woman who, for five years, had done a noble part in keeping the Manse as a radiant centre in a sin-darkened community. The way the missionary prepared the breakfast was adequate proof that he had rendered this service on many a previous morning.

Wash-day was more a night than a day in that mountain Manse, and so the little children’s garments on the kitchen clothes-line were carefully tested to see that

they were dry enough for wear after the Saturday night's washing. The baby's apparel needed a little more time to dry and so Joan was left to creep around on the cold floor in her night garments a little longer.

Breakfast and prayers over, the missionary rushed up the unpainted stairs to the uncarpeted study for the final preparation ere he entered the pulpit. A high wind had arisen and the unplastered boarding offered poor protection to the occupants of the room. In the adjoining room the children were being prepared for church, and while dressing the baby and directing the operations of the three others, the mother gave the Golden Text drill and helped Tommy with the 23rd Psalm. There was manifest assurance of a successful finish as Tommy reached the last verse. He recited it at a pace that reminded one of a runner on the home-stretch. The mother laughed merrily as she corrected his only error. "Not 'surely to goodness' Tommy, but 'surely goodness and mercy'." Twenty minutes before the time for service the missionary hurried along the trail to make a brief call where one lay "sick unto death". The news he brought back was not encouraging; the doctor thought that the life of the young man could not be prolonged more than twenty-four hours. With a sigh of sympathy the preacher passed out to his morning service.

"For the beauty of the earth" was the opening line of praise in which the congregation united in singing, and there are few sights in all the Dominion so inspiring to a praise service as the view from the south window of that little church situate in the heart of the Rockies. The opening prayer brought the thoughts of the worshippers to the sick chamber of the one they knew so well, and a sympathetic silence pervaded the place, even the

score of children being affected and their restlessness suppressed.

For five years the Home Missionary had labored in this remote mining community. Twice with his wife and little ones he had had to join in the anxious and rapid exodus before the devastating flames of a bushfire that swept the mountain sides clear of their little clusters of frame buildings. Both times he started again on his task with only such personal belongings as had been hurriedly pushed into a dunnage bag and a valise. The fire in its all-consuming race left them nothing except a stove and a few heat-twisted utensils. But the mines where the men earned a livelihood were still there and with never-failing western optimism, the missionary joined the other burned-out toilers in erecting a fresh cluster of unpretentious dwellings.

To the outside world he is quite unknown, and would probably be referred to as "only a minister-evangelist". His college course, owing to prolonged struggles to help a widowed mother and an invalid sister, was a shortened one, but his education on bended knee before the Mercy Seat had not been neglected, and had given him a clear insight into the need of human hearts and a realization of the everlasting mercy. The sermon that morning would have been acceptable in any church in the Dominion. The preacher realized that the men before him had their battles to fight and he made it clear that One was ready to co-operate with tried and tempted men, and to give help in time of need. If God was with a man then "all things" were possible. It was the utterance of a man who knew and loved his fellowmen, and we went forth feeling that the Lord had sent us help from the Sanctuary.

Nearly a hundred children gathered for the Sunday

School in the afternoon, and some senior scholars met a little later because there was not accommodation for all at the same time. The missionary superintended the School, and the mistress of the Manse, though wearied, taught a large primary class. Three teachers were absent—often absent—but the faithful three who were present doubled up and the lesson proceeded. At the close of the second session of teaching the missionary assisted in re-arranging the chairs for the next service. Intervening periods were spent in going down the hill-sides to invite the "boys" of the bunk houses to the services.

It was well past midnight when the visitor ascended the creaking stairs to the bare, unplastered guest room with its home-made bedstead and neatly covered boxes that answered for washstand and table. By the dim light of the little oil lamp he read of those who bring "good tidings", and then kneeling down, gave thanks for the brave souls who were on the other side of the rough board partition. Knowing little of home comforts and nothing of those frequent fellowships that encourage men in towns and cities, they grew not weary in well doing.

The writer considers his life enriched by the personal knowledge of the work done by such missionaries. There are plenty who can run and not be weary, but there are fewer who can walk and not faint. To "preach to a procession" as the work in some districts has frequently been described, to face an appalling indifference on the part of some, and a cynical antagonism on the part of others; to be deprived of helpful fellowships, and to struggle along with an income that makes it absolutely impossible to have satisfactory equipment for the work, constitutes a task that only the bravest can

face for five long years. Yet in the face of all this, the missionary said, "Yes, I've seen a lot of missionaries come and go, but I dare not leave my post until this whole district is different. It is hard for my wife, and there are few chances for the children, but I think God wants me here. The need is great and I love these rough chaps and so I am glad to stay. It really does not matter much what bit of the firing-line a man is on so long as he stands fast."

## CHAPTER XVI.

## With the Indians of the Pacific Coast

**W**E had passed through a severe storm that had wrecked almost a score of boats from Vancouver Island northward. The gale had been terrific in the vicinity of Queen Charlotte Island. The Captain of our coastal steamer was compelled to cast anchor for almost forty-eight hours in one of the sheltered, natural harbours that provide refuge from the sometimes terrifically angry sea.

There were several Indian encampments to be visited and by arrangement a missionary with his faithful Indian guide and another oarsman were waiting at the designated landing. Philip Haipee was a wise and interesting old Indian who looked as though he had been fashioned and fitted to thrive on storms and other transportation difficulties. To Philip modern modes of travel such as trains and steamboats and aeroplanes were products of evil spirits. It would have been something akin to sacrilege for him to have used anything but a canoe.

Tourists who visited that remote district sought to obtain Philip's services if he were available. He knew what to do in times of danger and many a canoe that must otherwise have been swamped on stormy waters was brought safely to shore because tawny, fearless, alert old Philip was in command.

The financial arrangements were soon settled when Philip's services were required. "How much?" was the tourist's usual question. The reply was brief and sounded a bit cannibalistic, but the optional figures indicated

the difference in remuneration according to whether tourist or Indian furnished the meals. "You eat me two dollars every day; I eat you three dollars every day." Usually the tourist decided to eat the Indian.

In his later years Philip gave every indication of having embraced the Christian faith and the missionary believed him to have been genuinely converted. The old man had undertaken to preach during one winter when no other supply was available. Little groups gathered in three widely-separated districts. An offering was received to encourage him in his work. The total from three centres averaged about fifty cents a Sunday. My missionary friend once remarked on the poor pay for so much journeying and three sermons. "They should do better than that for you, Philip. That's mighty poor pay for so much work." "Yes, boss, it mighty poo' pay, but it mighty poo' preach too," was the old Indian's frank and cheerful reply.

The canoe that was snubbed to a stake a short distance away was of the type called a dugout. It had once been the trunk of a fine cedar and had been hollowed and skilfully fashioned for riding the waters of the Pacific. Many a perilous trip had been made from island to island in Philip's dugout. We saw numerous others whose appearance suggested the days of tribal troubles when the war canoe was often seen along those northern shores. Philip himself, as a skilful warrior, had been in frequent adventures when quarrels between chiefs called each encampment to protect its own interests, or to wage warfare against the aggressor.

Having procured the usual supply of bacon, beans, flour, tea and sugar, the baggage, provisions and passengers were properly placed in the dugout, and although there seemed to be a fairly stiff breeze blowing,

Philip dismissed our fears by a shake of the head and an assurance that the wind was "falling asleep". He informed us that many of the Indians believed that the wind was caused by the "flapping of the wings of a big, big bird away off in the mountains". In his own simple, graphic way, our old guide entertained us during many a journeying hour or storm-bound period by his stories of storms and bears and thrilling experiences with the long-tusked walruses or voracious sharks.

On our first day's journey we passed one of the few remaining tepee villages. In earlier days there were several such encampments, especially on the prairie or among the foothills. Gradually these disappeared and crude but more permanent and more comfortable dwellings were erected.

It was well into the evening when Philip steered us down a picturesque inlet between jagged rocks among which cedars and pines drew forth sustenance from an apparently soil-less surface.

We were agreed that our first night should be under canvas, and so a suitable spot was selected and our tent pegged before it was quite dark. Cedar boughs and pine-needles made a satisfactory mattress and a delightfully wholesome smell. We were near enough to the water to hear its soothing swish over the rocky shore. It exerted a somnolent influence over us all. Breathing the unpolluted atmosphere of a smokeless and dustless land, and being undisturbed by civilization's nerve-wracking noises, one awakened appreciating the remark of a little street-arab who had been in a fresh air camp for the first time. As he stood at his tent flap in the early morning he said cheerfully, "Say, it's great to sleep where it smells so nice, ain't it? You don't feel thick like you do in the city."

The close of the following day found us approaching the encampment in which we were to spend two or three days. A group of interested Indians were at the shore to receive us and shook hands awkwardly but with cordiality. Near the shore were several elaborately carved and exceedingly grotesque totem poles. In front of almost every hut was some ugly figure denoting the clan to which the occupant belonged. To a stranger the whole place seemed grotesquely weird and as if belonging to an uncivilized age. But the poles were the pride of the encampment and the figures they bore indicated in picture-writing a certain significance to the clan. Often-times the totem is of an animal denoting the name by which the tribe or family is called. In this particular encampment the totem was of a bear. Any man belonging to that clan was known as, and called, a Bear. Then, too, the bear was regarded as the far-away ancestor and also as the present protector of the clan. Out of this ancient superstition had grown the religious reverence with which some tribes still regarded their totems.

A number of the lodges had doors made of the skins of animals that had been shot on the periodical hunting expeditions. Squaws were entering their dwellings with heavy loads of firewood on their backs. Day by day it is a part of their task to search for the necessary fuel. Groups of old Indians were squatting outside their crude abodes enjoying their tobacco. What scarred old warriors some of them were! Battles with men and battles with the beasts of the forests—a withered hand, a face that had been frightfully lacerated, a torn scalp, a huge wound on the breast, a crushed foot, all told of conflicts and struggles. Thrilling stories might be narrated of the adventure that brought honoured disfigurement, but the Indian does not indulge in blowing his own

trumpet, and such stories were never procurable from the hero himself.

Philip enlightened us in regard to the reticence of the Indian in this respect. "My father used to talk to me when we sat alone by the fire. He gave me much advice, some good, some not so good, because he tell me how to steal horses and how to kill my enemies. He sometimes hurt me much to try to make me brave so that I would fight and kill. But he always say not to tell anything good or brave about myself, that would be very bad thing for Indian to do. Let somebody else tell the good thing. He said boys are always treated better than girls because the day come when they had to be more brave and more likely to be killed than girls. I tell you some night how they make the boys brave to endure big suffering."

We were conducted to the chief's house. It was much more elaborate than the surrounding squatly little hovels of bark and boards and skins and smoke-holes.

Its entrance was quite imposing as compared with any other building in the encampment. An immense totem-pole seemed to stand as a sentinel protecting the inmates. An oval had been cut in the pole and by advancing through it in a stooping position one stood on a sort of ledge or gallery six or seven feet wide and running the entire circle of the lodge. Two similar galleries protruded below. A few steps led from one level to another. The lowest level would be ten or twelve feet below where we had entered. In the centre of this pit or amphitheatre was a square space a little lower than the board floor and carefully covered with stone so as to provide safety for a fireplace.

The visitors were to have the privilege of the lodge for an evening service, and were also to be entertained

in it. Several low stools were available and a number of plain chairs were requisitioned from various parts of the lodge. Those unable to find seats squatted as near to the fireplace or the pit as space allowed, or reclined on beds that were placed close to the gallery wall. Four or five tables were in use but there was nothing else that we regard as essential to the furnishings of a white man's home.

The gathering might have been called a pow-wow, for, while the term is used of a ceremony in which enchantment is practised, or for curing diseases, it is also used of a conference.

We were welcomed by the chief whose figure and robes and tattooed body gave him a very striking and weirdly attractive appearance.

After a few minutes of tribal greetings, he removed his robes to let us see the strange figures tattooed over every inch of skin on his breast and shoulders and arms. They were so elaborate and intricate and fantastic that much discomfort and pain must have been caused by it, but his pride in it seemed to indicate that he regarded the suffering as worth while.

Following his greetings, an exceedingly fluent tribesman made what our missionary friend said was a speech characterized by intellectual power; at times there was genuine eloquence. With his blanket across his shoulder and with remarkably easy and graceful gestures he made an impressive figure as he stood in the glow of the lodge fire. The faces of his fellow-tribesmen were as near to expressing interest, if not enthusiastic appreciation, as the unresponsive Indian ever displays before strangers. Evidently they were proud of their spokesman.

The missionary spoke in their own language and then interpreted for the visitor. They sang "Rock of Ages" and "Oh, safe to the Rock", and it stirred one's heart to hear the familiar strains from this curious looking throng. At some time or other most of them had found shelter among the rocks of that northern coast and could quite understand the imagery of these well-known hymns.

At the close of the service we prepared to move upward to the ledge where as guests of honour we were to be accommodated. Dependents and helpers occupied the ledge below us. There were probably thirty of them in all. In some lodges the household may number over one hundred.

We passed three sightless men, one young and two old. They had been huddled together listening to the speeches and hymns. Blindness is often caused by the constant smoke of the lodge.

It was pathetically amusing to see the children here, as in other lodges, flee in something akin to terror as we came near to them. We were strange and fearfull-looking creatures and perhaps they had heard stories of the wrongs inflicted on their forefathers by white warriors and unscrupulous traders. The mother's shawl was always the place of refuge.

There must have been seven or eight wolfish looking dogs near the entrance by which we had to pass to reach our corner. Their threatening growls and attempts to approach us were not comforting. Evidently white guests did not meet with their approval. We soon learned that it was unsafe to trust the long-haired, sneaky-looking creatures even when being entertained by their owners.

A small tent had been put up in one corner of the

upper ledge and with our own clean blankets nearest our bodies and with less clean skins and robes provided for us by our host-chief, we had a fairly comfortable resting place on the ground. We fastened the tent flap as securely as possible, but each of us had dreams of the ugly-looking brutes seeking to get their teeth into the objectionable-looking white men.

Perhaps the dogs had somehow inherited their distrust from their masters. Little wonder that thousands of Indians regarded all white men with suspicion. My tent-mate reminded me of the white man's trickery. Many a copper had been polished and passed off as gold. For these "gold" coins the Indian had been persuaded to trade his skins and products that would have been procured altogether too cheaply even if the coins had been gold instead of one five-hundredth part of the value claimed. Some of the carving of animals and other figures on wood and stone represented many weeks of patient and careful toil and would have done credit to any craftshop where a high type of workmanship prevails. Occasionally such work had been done on ivory and the skilful producer had received a few coppers in value for what the trader would receive very many dollars.

Promises had again and again been unfulfilled. Services rendered by the Indians at an agreed rate had been rewarded in the most trivial and dishonest manner. It was a wonder we were received as hospitably as we were. But as we talked to some of the older men the next morning we discovered that the names of Crosby, and Duncan, and Gate, and Green, and other faithful ambassadors were still recalled, and so long as such men are remembered on the Pacific Coast not even an Indian can be altogether cynical or distrustful.

And the faithful missionaries are still toiling among the various tribes of our west-land—worthy successors to those who have "obtained a good report through faith". They are continuing to build on other men's foundations knowing "that they without us should not be made perfect".

We were in the home of one of these loyal soldiers of the Cross for two days. He called us to the window of his little living-room one morning. "Keep out of sight, but here is an almost daily performance I want you to see." His boy of six and girl of eight were playing outside. A score of yards away an old, low-set, stout and very bow-legged Indian was approaching. As he came nearer, the children, who evidently were prepared for the meeting, stood side by side. The old man, without saying a word, and with a solemn face, slowly shook hands first with one and then with the other. The children were just as solemn as the Indian and seemed to understand as well as if a kindly word had been spoken. "The old man goes by every morning," said the missionary, "and never fails to do what you have just seen. Not a word is ever spoken. Some would laugh at it. But old Tom Keyask means more by that daily act than anyone who doesn't know the Indian could realize. He comes to the Mission regularly and I believe the truth is dawning on the poor old chap's mind. He told me that his bow legs were caused by carrying heavy loads when he was young. He frequently had long portages to make with unusually large camp packs.

"Like most of the Indians he lives from day to day. They seem to have no thought for the future. We had a very good girl to help us in the house for a few months. My wife once said to her—'Rosie, you have lots of

spare time just now: why not get your summer clothes together and mend them and fix them up so that they will be ready for the spring?' Rosie looked at her with surprise and said, 'Why, Mrs. Johnson, I might not be living in the spring.' That reply is typically Indian. Never do today what can be put off till tomorrow, because tomorrow you might not need to do it."

Before we left the district we saw, preceding a potlatch in one of the large lodges, several men undergoing what to us seemed to be a torturing process. Sometimes on arms, sometimes on chests or backs, and often on faces, the tattooing operations were going on. It depended on the desire of the one who was being decorated, or disfigured, as to what portions of the body should be tattooed. In tattooing, needles are used by being firmly inserted in thin strips of wood, and look like teeth in a comb. If the pattern is to be narrow a comb with only one or two needles is needed. It was sickening to watch the process and to hear the "ting" of many needles. Even faces that rarely show signs of suffering indicated the painfulness of the operation. Blood flowed freely and a few hours later the inflammation caused by the poisonous colours was very manifest.

We had two opportunities of witnessing a potlatch. The word potlatch is the Chinook for the great Indian feast or ceremonial "give away". Its main object is to enable the chief to dispense gifts to his own or neighbouring tribesmen and thereby obtain or retain their goodwill. To secure the honour or the good name that a potlatch was likely to bring, many an Indian toiled hard and practised the utmost economy for years. Not infrequently gifts of blankets and other desirable things to the amount of a thousand dollars were handed to those attending the celebration, and special awards to

the makers of totems. Although this act meant the enhancing of the distributor's reputation, it often resulted in his well-nigh disastrous impoverishment.

In later years many of the appalling and shocking abuses of the old-time potlatch were corrected.

Philip had seen the practices of the prairie and foot-hill Indians as well as those of the Pacific Coast tribes.

As we sat on the beach one night with our tent under the shelter of a great rock, Philip kept his promise to tell us how they made the boys brave to endure "big suffering". It would make too gruesome a narration to record it as we heard it that quiet night by the ocean shore. Suffice it to say that with huge wooden pins protruding through the flesh on both sides of the chest and with a wide ribbon of skin overlapping each pin there followed an all-day torture of pulling until the skin had stretched several inches. The close of the hideous "sacrifice", as they term it, was marked by the cutting off of the stretched skin and burning it. The youth who stood the torture in bravest spirit while praying to the spirits that were around and above and beneath would be the happiest and most successful warrior in the days to follow.

Philip also told us of buffalo-hunting days. Sometimes a whole village would start off with horses and tents and baggage to journey far in search of buffalo. This was always done when winter was approaching because the buffalo hair was in much better condition at that time and hence would afford ampler protection against the cold. Then too, the meat which they needed for winter would keep better. The men did the killing and the women prepared the meat and dressed the hides, making robe and lodge skins. What wild rides they

had had! what rampages! what hardships when the buffalo were not located where they had expected to find them!

Sometimes there was warfare. If they knew conflict was certain they would eat dog's flesh, as they believed it would put courage into them. After our contact with the vicious brutes in the lodges we could understand that belief. In his boyhood days Philip had taken his part in watching the horses of the tribe by night. It would have been a terrible disgrace to have fallen asleep because enemies might then steal the horses. But in spite of vigilant watching, marauding bands or unfriendly tribes would come upon them in the hours of darkness and make warfare to obtain whatever the camp possessed.

When his tribe was successful in repelling their enemies and in securing scalps there would be a night of great jubilation and often wild orgies. The scalps would be hung up so as to kindle the warlike spirit, and to remind the tribe of its own brave warriors. The men's bodies were painted in the most amazingly grotesque and brilliant colours to make them appear formidable. Faces of both men and women would be blackened or otherwise coloured. Wildly shouting the names of those who had performed the bravest deeds, the whole camp would continue its weird dances for many hours. Heads and bodies and hands would swing and sway and wave, keeping time to the music. The children also joined in the revelry, but in their own group.

Our next stopping-place was a very lonely little reserve of a few conical lodges sheltered by the towering hills. We were welcomed into a scantily furnished lodge and given permission to hold a service at the close of the day.

The nights were getting quite cold and when the word went round that visitors were going to sing with the tribe and talk to them, the women carried in more wood so as to make the lodge comfortable.

It was difficult to say what the effect of the service was, but at least there was as respectful attention as the average white congregation gives.

There was one common bedroom for us all that night and we lay in our blankets with our feet to the fire. The atmosphere might have been pleasanter, but we were tired, and except for an occasional growl from a dog, or troubled cry from the little ones, the night passed without any disturbance.

We were informed in the morning that there would be a tribal festival and dance that night and because we had spoken "good words" to them we were welcome to stay and hear their songs and stories.

One could scarcely believe it to have been the same non-communicative and unemotional crowd that had gathered the night before. The chief had put on his dancing mask and festival robes. His head-dress bore the crest of his tribe (an eagle), and was so made as to contain a roomy, open top, which was filled with swan's or eagle's down. It had been very carefully prepared and was almost as fine as snowflakes.

With a good deal of dignified ceremony he approached his white guests. Words were spoken in appreciation of the honour their visit was conferring upon the tribe. He assured them that all present wished them to know of the goodwill and peace that were in all their hearts. He bowed in such a way as to shower the down upon the guests. By that act peace is thereby confirmed and is considered binding upon the one who

does the scattering and upon the one on whom the down falls.

The stories the leading men of the encampment told could not be immediately translated to the writer, but the resonant voices and striking gestures and quaint singing still remain as interesting and pleasant memories.

For both dancing and singing the time was kept by the clapping of hands and the beating of a drum. The variety of hideously fantastic head-dresses was startling. Some of the masks were grotesquely amusing. A ridiculous effect was produced by pulling strings or wires that moved the lower jaws and eyes. They were most cleverly made and just as cleverly manipulated. We were fascinated by the strangest imaginable effects one or two of the men produced with the invisible strings or wires. Doubtless our close observation and amusement helped them to do their weirdest facial stunts.

Some of the women wore curiously fashioned and vividly coloured charms. Philip added the information that many of the squaws in all the coastal tribes drank certain potions supplied by the medicine-man, potions that were guaranteed to prevent them losing the love of their husbands. Unfortunately he was unable to furnish us with the prescription.

We would like to have procured some photographs of the scenes and costumes, but discovered that this particular encampment entertained the old and still common superstition that virtue departs from the person to the picture and that the photographer would ever after be able to wield a mysterious and perhaps very hurtful power over the one whose picture had been taken.

One or two in the lodge that night had seen life in the distant city, but most of them knew only the woods and lakes, and rivers and mountains. Those who had seen the strange things where the white man lived had wonderful tales to tell. They had been in buildings where "the whole room went up with big crowds of white men as if it were going where the Great Spirit dwells". Then they came down so fast and so long that the Indian thought they were surely "going to the place where the white man say the Evil Spirit dwells".

The squaws had prepared a feast and before any food was passed to the visitors or any of the tribe, the chief tasted it and, having pronounced it good, it was handed to the honoured guests.

That night we again slept around the lodge fire, or to be more accurate, the Indians slept and the white men lay and endured the most frightful odours imaginable. At best a small lodge with many lodgers is not pleasantly fragrant, especially where there is much dried fish and dried seaweed, but shortly after sundown the wind had changed and carried with it an odour that was almost unendurable. But there was no possible escape. Remembering the snarling dogs, we knew it would be unsafe to seek to go elsewhere through the night hours.

At least one tribe we visited cremated their dead, but where we stayed that night the custom was to erect scaffolds or use convenient branches or crotches of trees on which to place the bodies. Occasionally we saw corpses on a high rock, or placed on the ground with a sheltering roof over them. When the Indians themselves pass such burial places after dark they run or shout thinking thereby to frighten away the evil spirit.

In the morning Philip took us as near as we cared to go to the unburied bodies that had made our night so

wretched. Mats made of bark, or blankets, were the only covering about the dead. These wrappings had fallen to pieces. The horror of the smell and sight has never been obliterated. Surely the faithful missionaries who endured years of privation and discomfort and distress as they lived amongst these tribes demonstrated beyond all controversy that "love endureth all things".

A few of the old medicine-men still practised their wretched sorcery. They profess to combine the office of priest and doctor. Occasionally one finds medicine women also, and usually they are about as repulsive as a human being can well be.

There is no greater appeal for a Gospel ministry among the Indians than the faces of some of these women. What an appalling tragedy if the often attractive children of the lodge or encampment are permitted to grow amid unchristianized surroundings that may continue to produce debased, degraded creatures such as these wretched-looking old hags.

The medicine-men were not at all cordial to the visitors. The missionary was gaining influence too fast and injuring their efforts, and thus intense jealousy was created. If he continued to preach, the medicine-man's craft would be endangered. A few of these weird, long-haired creatures had not long before secured some clothes belonging to a missionary. They had jumped and danced on them in the fiercest, wildest way, shrieking forth all the hateful curses of which they were capable.

If any disease or scourge spread throughout the district the medicine-men blamed it on the missionary or some other white visitor, or on the white man's boat that put in at their encampment. Any or all of these might be the Evil Spirit.

We saw one medicine-man treating a sick squaw. He had been rubbing her body with a very dirty magical rag and after each rubbing would shake it vigorously. This was supposed to banish the evil spirit.

On another occasion four of these men were engaged in "curing" the victim. One was blowing a shrill whistle, another was beating a drum made of hollowed cedar with a dried skin stretched tightly over it: he pounded it in a perfect frenzy of excitement. A third was shaking one of those weird, nerve-wracking rattles. A fourth was dispensing herbs. The herbs must have amazing merit if they were able to overcome the fever the other three noisy performances would surely produce. However, there is little doubt but that some of the medicine-men did really know the medicinal value of some wild herbs and roots, and of balsam and spruce, which were also frequently used.

But there was so much of evil in their ministrations that the bitter experiences resulting from their treatments were causing the Indians to gradually lose their faith in these fanatical necromancers.

One man's medicine bag contained selected portions of the entrails of certain animals, the heads and claws of others, feathers, a human finger, a dog's heart, and some toe-nails.

Crowns of cedar-bark, painted bodies and faces, and the chanting of a wild dirge, made their incantations devilishly impressive to these poor onlookers, who could do nothing for their suffering friends, but who hoped that somehow this wild effort would drive away the disease. The charms worn were hideous enough to scare anything away.

Sometimes the whooping and dancing took place

around the bed or mat on which the sick man lay. So continuous were the shrieking efforts that the sufferer had no chance to rest. If any dare doubt the efficacy of it, then all the medicine-man's witchcraft would be used against the skeptical one. A man so cursed became so fearful and discouraged as to the future, that he would succumb to the first sickness thereafter.

Philip told us that he had often seen young children bled by a piece of glass in the dirty hands of the medicine-man. If no glass were available, or if the disease did not yield to that treatment, then a burning stick or hot iron might be tried. He had seen the helpless boy or girl squirm and writhe in arms that tried to hold the little body firmly while the bad spirit was driven out by these torturing methods.

And yet in preparation for becoming a medicine-man the youth would fast and pray until a vision of his god came to him. If that god should turn out to be a bird or an animal, then it would assume the office of guide and protector throughout his remaining days.

One could not at that time say honestly that there was any noticeable "hunger for the Gospel", to use the phrase that characterizes many reports of work among the unchristianized, but when one considers how revolutionary the changes must be if the Indian accepts the teaching of Christ, and how the tribes love and cling to their own religious beliefs and ceremonies, and how they can painfully recall the injustices of the white man, it is no wonder that so many are antagonistic to their yet inadequate conception of New Testament teaching.

But thank God the scalp-dance and most of the disgusting orgies were coming to an end, and where once the war-whoop was heard there was arising Sabbath by Sabbath the Christian hymns of praise.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### By a Norwegian Fjord

I HAD not expected to occupy a guest room in Norway. The country and people were absolutely unknown to me, but in my "En Route" file was a letter received two weeks before sailing. It was from a Norwegian whom I had met in Quebec Province some months before. He had heard of my contemplated trip. Twenty years before, at the age of sixteen, he had left the idyllic surroundings of his farmstead home in a valley in the southwest of Norway, and had said goodbye to his native land with its lovely fjords and rugged coasts that he might have larger opportunities on the other side of the Atlantic, from which his neighbourhood had received good reports.

"Could you not try to see my father and mother," he wrote, "they are less than forty miles from Bergen: the train will take you very near and buses are also quite convenient. I would take it as a great personal kindness if you should be able to visit them, and it would give them much pleasure." He added the information that they could speak no English. As I could speak no Norwegian the prospect of a satisfactory meeting was not very hopeful.

I transferred the address to my note-book with the hope of crowding in a hurried call.

It was Thursday afternoon when the fastest boat on the North Sea, the motor-ship *Venus*, entered the picturesquely situated harbour of Bergen.

There was the usual bustle of getting the passenger, his baggage and the customs official on the same spot

at the same time, and the usual relief in obtaining the chalk mark without having to pay duty. I enquired for the representative of my trans-Atlantic Steamship Company. Several of the unfailingly courteous officials and police assisted in the search. At last the much-wanted man was located. He was needed in a score of directions by tourists unable to speak Norwegian. He gave me the information I particularly desired. He looked at my name again and then exclaimed: "Ya, Ya, Yavist!" (Yes! Yes! Certainly!). "Someone has been trying to find you; I will find them. Please do not go away." And he was gone. I was impatient at the delay for I was anxious to get to my hotel that I might use every minute at my disposal.

A few minutes later I saw him pushing his way through the crowd, followed by a rather tall, but slightly bent elderly man, whose blue eyes and fair hair suggested descent from the race of people who had reached Scandinavia twenty centuries before.

With an eager cordiality that is typically Norwegian he clasped my hand and made a rather unsuccessful attempt to pronounce my name. The representative was being sought by many others, and was compelled to leave us temporarily. The Canadian and the Norwegian stood smiling at each other and not an intelligible word available on either side. From his pocket Olaf Grotte drew a letter. The heading was "Lachine, Quebec, Canada." The rest of the letter was in Norwegian except for the name of the visitor, to which Olaf smilingly pointed. He stooped down and seized my baggage, making for the exit. I halted him, and by gesture and word explained that I was going to the *Hotell*. He shook his head vigorously. "Nei, nei," he said again and again, with that attractive pronunciation and de-

lightful singing quality in its inflection that is peculiar to his race.

Smiling apologetically I uttered one of the only two bits of Norwegian I had practised. "Yeg kan ikke talc norsk" (I cannot speak Norwegian). That did not dampen his cordiality a particle; once more he captured my baggage.

Just then the transportation agent passed near us. I brought him over to explain to Mr. Grotte that I desired to see the fishing boats at Bergen and to see the catch brought in, and to visit many places of interest in the town and vicinity. I also desired to get to some nearby rural districts and see how the country folk lived; then, too, I wished to attend a Sunday Service in both town and country. "Please thank him and tell him that I think the *Hotell* will be much more convenient." The reply was that Olaf's wife was awaiting me and that there were trains or buses that would make all my plans possible, and that because I knew their boy they wanted "so very much" to have me stay with them. With a pleasant emphasis Olaf told him to inform me that my "*aftensmat, vaerelse and frokost*" (dinner, room and breakfast) were all ready.

There was nothing to do but to assent. My interpreter said "Ya, Takk." (Yes, Thank you), and the blue eyes smiled appreciatively as he saw he had won out.

We walked along the harbour roadway to the bus terminus behind the museum. There was time enough before leaving for me to look at the statue of Edvard Grieg, whose musical compositions, marked by beauty and grace, have delighted a world. Nearby is also the

fountain statue of Ole Bull, who thrilled a world with his violin.

An hour later we were winding and climbing those scenic highways, and negotiating those hair-pin turns that are so numerous on the Norwegian mountain sides —mountains whose formation proves that they reared their heads long before the Alps, as we see them today, were fashioned. On the whole Norway is comparatively verdureless, only two and a half per cent. of the whole land being arable. From the steamer and train one sees little farm houses that appear to be so exceedingly isolated on the uplands that one wonders how an existence can be eked out, and what possible convenient connection they can have with the outer world.

As the bus slowed down at a cross-road my host cheerily waved in the direction of a narrow winding roadway and suggested we were nearing our destination. We started on our half-mile walk. The wild flowers were varied and brilliant. The pines, spruces and birch, with an occasional oak or maple, made a glorious picture. Many think of Norway as cold and dark, but like Canada, it is a much-libelled country as regards climate. Several of its towns have out-of-doors cafes; many exotic plants grow luxuriously. The coast generally speaking, has a mild winter and a cool summer, while inland it is the reverse.

The Grotte home was not greatly different to a similarly located Canadian dwelling. Lilacs, luxuriant rhododendrons, laburnum—to the last mentioned they give the suitably picturesque name "golden rain",—geraniums and other flowers provided a wealth of bloom. Before we reached the doorway a cheery soul was smiling forth a welcome. She had put on her festi-

val attire, the Norwegian native costume. She was certainly an attractive, colourful figure, with the large white pillow-like headgear, white sleeves, and white embroidered apron. A gaily-coloured and elaborately-worked sleeveless vest with two long golden tabs from the belt to below the knees completed the attire. A ruddy and almost mirthful face seemed to match the holiday costume.

To my *takk takk* for her kindly greeting she responded with many cordial words, one of which sounded like "velvekomme". I knew from her kindly expression that it carried the same meaning as our "welcome".

Within a few minutes there was handed me a photograph of their son whom I had met in Quebec. There was a quiver in the voice and the mother love-light in her eyes as she said, "Sin kjaere gutt i Canada", our dear boy in Canada. I tried to express my appreciation of him by their simple word 'god', in English 'good'. They smiled gratefully.

At the close of the meal the host looked at me enquiringly—"Prest?" "Ja," was the only reply I could give. He nodded at me and looked reverently upward. He and his wife bowed their heads.

The host had asked a blessing in a language his guest did not understand, and now the guest returned thanks in a language the host did not comprehend, but the One who understood both created that intelligible bond of fellowship that overcomes and transcends all linguistic handicaps. "Yesus Christus" smilingly said the guest. The reply was quietly and slowly given: "Ya! Yesus Christus; Yesus Christus" (Jesus is pronounced Yesus and is sometimes spelled that way).

During the evening (it was good daylight at eleven

p.m.), we walked by quiet ways over to one of the fjords. Boatmen were out in their smaller craft returning with sardines. Salmon nets were near the shore. In the distance larger boats might be seen going farther out into the North Sea water for the larger catch. One in every twenty-five Norwegians is a fisherman, and the yearly catch of cod and herring alone is 800,000 tons, to say nothing of salmon, lobster, mackerel and many other fish.

I followed my host to a higher viewpoint. What a figure he was as he stood on a protruding ledge of rock on the mountain-side, silhouetted against the evening sky. Not another soul was now in sight. Hills and rocks and waters and the grey sky and this man. As he stood there he seemed suggestive of the rugged independence and dominant fearlessness that have grown out of the Norwegians' passionate love of their land and their struggles in its behalf. The indescribably charming ruggedness of all about us seemed likely to produce his type.

We stood many minutes, silent and motionless, gazing at the waters below and far off to the distant horizon. Perhaps he was thinking as I was thinking of the far-away days from which come the thrilling stories of his ancestors. No adventure was too hazardous for those ferocious fighters in the Viking days. Perils of waters never daunted the forty or fifty rowers who pulled off into the stormy sea in the grimly carved boats with their paganly figured prows. Unwelcome visitors they certainly were as they appeared sooner or later at river mouths in practically all European sea-coast countries. What terror they brought!

And here stood a descendant of theirs with probably equal courage and equal physical vigor and the same sturdy independence but who could bow his head in

reverence and say "Ya! Yesus Christus," and who desired to be known as a follower of the Prince of Peace.

We sat out among the flowers on our return. I praised them as best I could. He motioned to his wife, letting me know that much of the credit was due her.

There was another (unnecessary) meal near midnight. The visitor was again given "the chair of honour" (*hoi saete*), a bench-like looking seat with solid high back and intricate carving. It must have been handed down through three or four generations.

It was growing dark within the house and a petroleum oil lamp was given the visitor as he prepared to retire to his room. With a parting "Godnatt" he climbed the steep, narrow stairway. The bedstead was evidently a relic of much earlier days. Four very heavy posts supported a solid top at which the sleeper could look and try to count the maze of inlaid woods. Cornice, posts, sides, head and foot were all deeply carved.

The mattress lay in the box-like bed, the sides of which were high enough to prevent any bedding slipping to the floor. For covering there was the customary Scandinavian *dun teppe* (down cover), really another feather mattress, but considerably lighter than the one below and from which the outer covering could easily be removed. I was awakened by the roosters. After having spent so many hours without hearing a word of my native tongue it gave something akin to a thrill to hear the rooster crowing in English. There was brought to my room the *kaffe pan sengen* (coffee on bed) which is always considered an essential courtesy.

After breakfast I was motioned into the kitchen that I might see more of my hostess' home. Entirely covering

the wall at one end were plate racks containing many unique plates and dishes that would have delighted the heart of a collector of antiques. Pans and pots of brass or copper were arranged on shelves or cupboards; all were spotlessly polished. Two or three chairs looked as though they were the handiwork of a homesteader who in a former century had used the winter days for adding to the household furniture. Much of the Norwegian peasant carpentry and architecture shows remarkable workmanship. There was a great charm about the simplicity and cleanliness and calm homeliness of Mrs. Grotte and her domestic life. If her life was lonely it appeared to be a very contented and very healthful loneliness and she was spared the unwholesome feverishness of the social whirl and fussiness after which so many scramble—

*"Love she had found in huts where poor men lie,  
Her daily teachers had been woods and rills,  
The silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."*

Fortunately for me on our next bus ride I asked a young man sitting near us if he could speak English; "A little" he replied. He had spent nearly three years in the States and was spending a few months with his friends. Strangely enough he was living within a mile of the Grotte home. I explained the situation and he at once entered into conversation with my host, the result of which was a promise to join us at the evening meal.

What a time we had! How we enjoyed each other's linguistic blunders. What never-ending questions were interpreted to me about their boy in Canada—his health, his wife, his child, the place, the church, his attendance thereat, as also a multitude of questions about Canadian life in general.

In return I gained much information about earlier life in Norway as had been told my host by his father and grandfather. The log house, sometimes built with great difficulty, on the small, cultivatable patches on the cliff sides, were reached only by the steep, zig-zag paths leading from the fjord. The home-made boat was their only means of transportation. Most Norwegian farms were, and are, small. Their usual locations are in the valleys.

No windows were in the early houses. A square boxed-in body of stones and mortar occupied the centre of the floor and served as the fireplace. The iron pot or kettle hung from the rafters and a hole in the roof gave light, ventilation and an escape for the smoke. Huge box-like affairs for bedsteads were built into one or more corners of the room and steps were made to enable the occupant to retire and rise without too great an effort. My host explained that the sides were so high that once the three or four occupants were wedged in there was no danger of anyone falling out of bed.

I had wondered about the little buildings I could see far up the mountainsides—farther than the remote farms. "Ja! They are the 'seters' or outposts of those little farms. They are for the use of the cattle girls who care for the goats and cows that they may find pasturage on the farther heights during certain summer months." Would I like to hear some of the songs about these girls and their departure with the cattle? "Ja! Ja! Vaer sd god" (Yes! Yes! Please). The interpreter explained that many of Norway's most charming folk songs relate to the merry festival that is the occasion of the annual departure of these young folks to their lonely but coveted mountain tasks.

Olaf left the room and in a few minutes appeared in the national costume, for he had once played in the "oraskullen". He brought from a cupboard a violin and for an hour the three Norwegians entertained me with seter songs, love songs, herdsmen's cattle cries and folk dances. Rarely have I had more enjoyment. Their enjoyment seemed as great as mine for like most mountain-folk they are naturally musical. There was no jazz and the rhythms were well-defined. The tunes were at times touched with a certain melancholy, but so far as I was able to get an interpretation, their songs are thoughtful and full of a warm patriotism that extols their beautiful land.

During the next two days we three men had happy sightseeing trips together. The Sunday intervening was spent in the sanctuary. The Norwegian national religion is Evangelical Lutheran. The morning service in the little church at the cross-roads was attended mainly by the peasant class. A few men were in the national costume and wore broad-rimmed black hats. The older women were in long black coats, but the rest of the congregation were clothed much as any English-speaking congregation would be in a similar community.

The "prest" wore a full-length gown crowned with a many-pleated white collar or neckpiece—a sort of Queen Mary effect. On the communion table in front of the pulpit was a cross and a lighted candle on either side. The service seemed lifeless and the singing was poor. The tempo of the hymns depended entirely on the ability of the organist to find the next notes. A little choir attempted a big anthem. It reminded me of an incident Dr. F. B. Meyer used to tell. On a church

announcement board were two lines following the hour of service. Subject:

### THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIALS

ANTHEMS BY THE CHOIR

We walked across some small hayfields on our return. "Steel thread" (wire ropes) are used to hang the grass on instead of letting it dry on the ground. The former is the better method for that very rainy locality.

In the evening we went to a town church. Over the door was the word "Ebenezer". The singing was good and the choir rendered a selection with a haunting refrain, "For Jesus". In that name the stranger knew they were one. Probably it was a deacon who was asked to pray. He was a very old man with a face that was a benediction and that indicated a realization of his Father's care. Throughout the whole of his prayer he kept his right hand uplifted.

The preacher several times used the words Jesus Christus, Golgotha, Calvary; I knew an appeal was being made. His hands were outstretched and there were throbbing tones and pleading looks that could scarcely mean anything less. A man near me slowly raised his hand to his face and with a finger wiped away a tear. Between the pauses in the delivery of the sermon one could hear the strains of music and of merry voices from a pleasure steamer on one of the fjords. Thousands were out on pleasure-seeking trips, quite indifferent to the Sanctuary and the things for which it stands, but here were the "salt of the earth", the antiseptic influence in the nation's life. The man with the throbbing voice and outstretched hand in which is a testament, is on the winning side. I waited to shake hands with him and we

understood that our desires and purposes were one and each uttered a benediction on the other.

A day later and goodbyes had to be said to my Norwegian host and hostess. A few flowers gathered from her garden and pressed by mother's hands were in my suit-case for "our dear boy in Canada". My vocabulary had been slightly increased and I could say with grateful appreciation, "*Mange takk*" (Thank you very much). "*Nei! Nei! Inyen arsak,*" was the reply (No! No! No cause for thanks).

Many wistful eyes besides those of the Grottes are full of love for the "dear boy in Canada." And if this simple word-sketch should reach the eyes of some lad or man who has left far across the sea those who have never ceased to love him, may it be a reminder of the claims of these distant and sometimes lonely ones—a reminder of what he may do to brighten their twilight days.

"*Don't think that the young and giddy friends  
Who make your pastime gay,  
Have half the anxious thoughts for you  
As the old folks far away.*

"*The dear old folks back there at home,  
With locks fast turning white,  
Are longing to get some word from you,  
Write them a letter tonight.*"

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## The Burden of the Burden-Bearer

**I**T was in a far-away land that a great preacher whom I had been privileged to meet on more than one occasion, insisted that while in his home city I should be his guest. No man interested in preaching and preachers but would have deemed such hospitality a real honor. The great preacher was also a great man, or to be more specific, he was a good great man; good without any reservations so far as human comparisons were concerned.

Although my arrival was around midnight, he had crossed the city to meet an unknown Canadian missionary and extend to him a royal welcome. As we were being driven along some of the great city's greatest highways to his suburban residence, he informed me that his wife was away from home just then, but that they had a good housekeeper and he thought I should be quite comfortable.

The guest room was spacious and beautiful. The furnishings revealed exquisite taste. It was an amazing contrast to much that is described in other chapters of this book. It seemed as if no effort had been spared to minister to the comfort and enjoyment of body, mind and spirit.

On the second night we attended a missionary rally some miles away at which my host had made, in the opinion of some his friends, "the address of his life". Those present will never forget the thrilling modulation of that cultured voice and the dignity of gesture that in themselves magnetized the audience. His word pictures

and his thrilling appeals were aglow with diffused fire. We felt, in the words of a humble listener to another great preacher, that "he was a-dying to have men saved." How his loving heart yearned for the lands still in darkness! How he rebuked our callousness, and awakened our concern and stirred the deepest and best that was within us! We were unconscious of the lapse of time as we were brought face to face with a lost world and with a Saviour waiting for us to work with Him for its redemption.

For nearly thirty minutes after the service had ended the almost exhausted preacher was being greeted by friends who simply could not let him leave until out of full hearts they had said some word of appreciation or expressed some new purpose that his God-given appeal had created. At last the church was empty and he walked wearily to the waiting car which was parked a short distance from the entrance.

A young woman whose life story was partly revealed by her walk and her face, approached us. A pair of piercingly brazen eyes glanced at us a moment and then quickly looked in another direction. We had scarcely passed her when she called out my host's name. He immediately turned back and stepped towards her. She looked into his face and said: "For God's sake give me some money." The great preacher, who had so aroused the sympathy of the audience, had not lost his own. With a great love in his heart and a look of kindly pity, wearied though he was, he patiently tarried and talked in tender tones. Placing his hand on her arm he walked some distance from the waiting car. When they returned to the spot on which she had accosted him he was evidently pleading with her to do something that she could not be persuaded to do.

I learned afterwards that she had once attended a Mission Sunday School that he had organized and later on she had heard him preach in a midnight service for the people of the underworld. He had been hearing her story as they walked back and forth; a story of misplaced affection and betrayal, a lost position, an unfriendly world, a child that she loved and for whom she had at last felt there was only one way of providing.

He had pleaded with her to accompany us and let him drive her to one of the Homes for Friendless Girls, the matron of which was one of his own church members. They would also make arrangements for the care of the child. But she had many objections to the kindly-intentioned plan. She did, however, give him the address of the wretched creature with whom she and others of her class found lodgings. A friend informed me later that after careful investigation by a Christian woman, the girl's story was found to be true and she was tenderly helped back to a new life. The little child was dedicated to the Lord some months after, and one of its Christian names is in loving memory of the preacher who tarried to be merciful.

My host accompanied me to the guest room that night and dropped wearily into one of the reposeful chairs. And as is often the case when mind and body are wearied, the night hours invited those man-to-man revelations of hopes and fears and disappointments and heartbreaks that seem the portion of every worthy life.

Much that he said during those midnight hours may not be narrated, but to the occupant of the guest-room there was brought never-to-be-forgotten encouragement. What burdens some of the greatest apostles of cheer and sunshine carry! Heavy-laden themselves, they are ever seeking to bear the burdens of others.

Despite the heart agonies that would end life for many a man who had no Divine refuge, they carry on in the knowledge that a good God will not leave desolate the soul that trusteth in Him.

"I told you my wife was away," he commenced in a tone that suggested a heart's sorrow. "Perhaps you wonder why I have not spoken oftener of her. She greatly enjoys society life and just now is away for a week's merriment with a little clique belonging to one of the most fashionable city clubs. I have never felt that I could waste time on such purposeless social gaieties. Do you remember Benjamin Franklin's question, 'Dost thou love life?' Then he adds: 'Do not squander time for that's the stuff of which life is made.' But my wife enjoys these social functions and while she is not exactly antagonistic to my work, she has never really been sympathetic. For many years it has been the cause of a growing estrangement. I cannot take pleasure in the godless amusements that please her, and she never wishes to accompany me in my missionary and preaching journeys. Often when I return home she is away." The words were uttered slowly and were full of a pathos that cannot be reproduced on the printed page. There was a sigh and then a long pause: "I have sometimes felt as though I were welcome in every home on earth except my own. When I come from some of the lonely little parsonages and manses with their comparatively few comforts, but where love reigns and where man and wife work with one purpose, I feel that I could let go all I possess and all the fame—unmerited perhaps—for a godly wife whose arms would be open to receive and welcome me when I return, sometimes downcast, from the congratulatory throngs. Oh, my friend, the most heart-piercing pain that has come to me in life

has come through the consciousness that the face of the one I have desired to love most, lights up with more pleasure at the coming of other friends than at the return of her husband. It seems to have been the terrible penalty for my devotion to the ministry to which I unreservedly gave my whole life.

"For twenty-five years I have had neither wife nor child to manifest any interest or love in the things for which I live. Mingling with thousands of God's people I am nevertheless one of the loneliest of men. She never forgets my birthday and there is always a nice gift at that time and at Christmas, but I do not want her presents, I want her love. My nature cries out for a demonstration of love that only home can supply." There was a long pause as he buried his face in his hands. At last he continued: "How little the people to whom we preach know of our own burdens. Many have thanked me for the message that has cheered and have expressed the wish that they might live the unfailingly happy life I live and perhaps that very night ere I slept I wept from sheer loneliness."

With tear-filled eyes the great soul, who like Elijah had uttered words that could only be spoken after the depression and weariness of victory, bade me "Good-night". He leaned dejectedly a moment or two against the door-case: "God forgive me if I have said what should never have been uttered, but oh . . ." The brave but bent man went to his room and on the morrow continued his ministry of lifting burdens from other hearts.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### In the Mountain Regions of the South

IT was to "one of the most God-forsaken spots to be found in the whole South" that we had been invited. A week's visit with the missionary who had a roving commission covering a wide territory had been planned so that we might see certain conditions; then we were to do a little preaching or "hold a meeting" as the Southerners term a week's evangelistic services, and maybe on our return to "civilization" use the information we had gathered to create some interest in a long-neglected class known as the "mountain-whites".

To reach the little town at which we were to find mules waiting, it was necessary to take one of the old-time coaches, for this visit was made many years ago. We found the only remaining accommodation was on the top of the "Concord", a rather elaborate "stage".

For the benefit of those who know only the comfortable, modern modes of travel, a brief description of the Concord may be desirable. Small iron steps were available for those who climbed to the seats over the coach body. The coal-oil headlight was fastened in the front centre below the exalted driver's foot-rest. Behind him were four double seats, each of which had sometimes to accommodate a third passenger, giving room for twelve in all. Beneath the feet of the outside passengers was the body of the coach, the Concord's reserved compartment, accommodating four persons. Fancily fringed curtains might be pulled down when privacy was desired. Comfortable cushions made the journey quite endurable for these privileged few. Such baggage as was permitted,

was piled in two small enclosures, one under the driver's seat and the other at the rear of the stage body.

Our trip on the Concord lasted thirty-two hours and continued throughout the night. Just before sun-down, the driver pulled up his steeds and made sure that all the passengers on the outside were securely strapped to their respective seats. The rough roads caused the stage to sway and pitch like a boat on a stormy lake. Even during daylight hours, it was often difficult to keep in one's allotted space, but especially was it so when with the night hours drowsiness overcame most of the passengers.

The missionary and the mules were awaiting us at the stage terminal. The dollar-a-day hostel, which constituted the place of arrival and departure, was the only place of accommodation the town possessed. The arrival of the coach was the great event of the week, and each passenger had to face the curious, though not unfriendly gaze of the line-up of citizens. If an on-looker had information about any new arrival, it was quickly passed from lip to lip. All of the men seemed to be inveterate tobacco chewers; abundant evidences of the habit were everywhere manifested, no building nor room being unstained.

After an hour's rest, a typical and appetizing southern meal was served. Fried chicken, candied sweet potatoes and constantly replenished hot biscuits disappeared in amazing quantity, while buttered corncake with the indispensable sorgum was evidently a favorite dessert with the mountaineers.

By mid-afternoon we were preparing our baggage for the journey. All any passenger could carry would be what he could "pack in" on his horse or mule. A

number of others were making similar preparations and a variety of steeds were lined up as closely as the kicking propensities of the mules would safely permit. Even then several of them made desperate efforts to cover the space between their hind feet and the nearest living object.

My southern experiences make me appreciate Josh Billings' remark that if he were ever tempted to mourn over a dead mule, he would do it "at the head end". One exceedingly bony old horse was being ridden saddleless by a man who looked as neglected and forlorn as his steed. He was the target of many sallies from the tobacco-chewing onlookers, who were supporting the hotel boardings. "Whar you leggin' it on that saw-horse, pardner?" called one.

"Perty good ridge along that nag's roof, neighbour," called another, as he bit a chew off of his twisted, home-grown tobacco. (The mountaineer prefers chewing to smoking, and will tell you it is much less bother.) "Git on 'im easy, pardner, er you'll cut your pants."

"Whar'd you find him; wus he *alive*?"

"Say, Bill, you'd better put a bed-tick on him or you'll be legs up to th' ears 'fore you make Misery Peak."

But Bill managed to straddle the "ridge" without disaster and with a weary wave of the hand moved away at a pace that drew a farewell warning from the stage-driver that if he were going far at that gait, he would "shore enough" not reach home in time for his own funeral.

One good-natured-looking darkie was trying to fasten a package to the saddle of his very fractious mule. The mule manifested its opposition to the process by swinging around in every direction, and by doing about

as rapid "heel-shooting" as any of the amused onlookers had ever seen. But Sam kept his eyes on both ends of his mule and continued his attempts. "Does he ever kick you, Sam?" called a friendly voice. "No, sah, he never kicks *me*, but he mighty often kicks where I'se just been."

My missionary pilot took me aside to point out some of the interesting features of the district. The azalea bushes on the hillsides were at their best, and seemed, after what we had just witnessed, to suggest the line "Where every prospect pleases and only man is vile." There are numerous species of azaleas on the American continent, but those of the South are of unusual beauty. Rhododendrons, a closely allied genus, were also plentiful. The white dogwood and Judas-tree add great beauty to the landscape in the blossoming season. The former is said to derive its name from the fact that a decoction of its leaves was used to wash dogs and free them from troublesome vermin. A little later there is the delicate pink of the laurels and the almost overwhelming beauty and profusion of the smaller wild flowers.

But the missionary wished to speak of the family feuds that are slow in dying out. "We are at the hub of a big district here, and at some time or other most of the mountain-whites have to come to town. Rather a dignified title for this wretched spot, eh? Being a centre where the folks gather, more murders take place here than anywhere else. Do not think this is representative of Southern life, but you'll see the reason for these bad social conditions in these mountain regions before we are through. That ramshackle old chocolate-coloured lean-to over there is the post office. I suppose it's only a hundred yards from the hotel, but between those two buildings the former missionary told me

twenty-eight men had fallen from bullet shots—all results of family feuds.

"Tomorrow, if we make good progress, we shall be visiting a little shack in the Blue Gorge where a woman and her three boys live. The first time I called she opened a box and showed me a dirty old handkerchief that seemed to have iron-rust marks on it. I had mentioned the pity of a recent death in a shooting affray. She said, almost fiercely, as she held up the handkerchief, 'don't talk to me that-a-way; that's my man's blood; they jest stobbed him, they did; there hain't no law up hyar, so I show it to my three boys mostly every-day and I tell 'em I want 'em to be a-watchin' to avenge their father's blood.' " The missionary explained the lack of legal machinery and the difficulty these people had had of getting anything approaching justice. And so for two or three generations at least, each man had been his own judge and avenger.

"Some morning," he continued, "one of those boys will start out with a vow upon his lips that he will not return until he has killed a member of the Baker family. He may linger around this place for several days until he sees his chance. When the deed is done he will hide in the mountains for a few weeks, and after the stir has died down will quietly return to his home. Then maybe a year or two later a Baker will set out to even up the score for his kindred; and so it goes.

"The first week I was here a chap left his shack with the vow they ordinarily take, swearing that he would shoot the first man by the name of Railton whom he could find and thus avenge a brother's murder of seven years before. It happened that he met on the trail one of the best old men the district possesses, and good men are scarce here. As he put his hand to his hip

pocket the old man knew what it meant, and pleaded for mercy, but he fell on the wayside and lay there with four bullets in his body."

A few months before "Guest Rooms" was published the following appeared in the daily papers, showing that the feudists are still active:

"Sheriff Harve Steele confessed himself powerless to cope with Kentucky's latest outbreak of the traditional war of clans. In fact, the official admitted that he expected more gunfire in this newest feud between the Crooks and the Johnson families, which has already cost four lives and placed two of the feudists in hospitals with serious wounds.

"In the Johnson clan, the two who died were 'Big Henry', 35, and his brother, Earl, 25. 'Little Henry' Johnson, 21, a first cousin of the dead brothers, was in a hospital in a dying condition from wounds. Willie Johnson, 17-year-old brother of the slain men, was also suffering from bullet wounds.

"Willie was declared to be the cause of the feud. The 'Crookses' accused him of having wronged a member of their family.

"Asked why he had not jailed Willie to prevent further gunplay, Sheriff Steele replied:

"'If I took him up, they'd be shooting through the jail. He's better off in the hospital.'

"'Will there be any more shooting?' the sheriff was asked.

"'Sure,' he replied. 'I can't stop it. It's the way of the folks down here.'"

After most of the mules and their drivers had departed and the hotel corner was comparatively deserted, we commenced our journey on two well-conditioned animals. Very few roads had been made, and in less than an hour we were following along the bank of a creek, and in all our subsequent travelling until the return to catch the stage, we were following creeks or else journeying over rarely-travelled trails or bridle paths.

Often the creek-beds were the only possible way. One scarcely knew whether the creek had possession of the trail, or the trail of the creek. The stream-beds are always stony and rough, but are not difficult when the water is low or practically gone. There are weeks, however, when snows are melting and the floods have come. To ride up and through the miniature waterfalls and surging rapids involves considerable danger. The water is murky, and neither horse nor rider can see the bottom. Frequently an animal slips on a boulder, only to struggle and plunge among several others.

When leaving the creek to reach a remote shack to which we had been directed "in the head of the holler", there were alarmingly precipitous rocks to ascend. It seemed incredible that the women folks with baskets and babies dare face such a hazardous journey to the distant store. But the few eggs must be exchanged for such necessities as could not be grown on their hillside plot, and the housekeeper knew best what to procure. And so the women faced such dangers as a necessary part of their daily struggle for bread. "Yes!" said one woman, of the journey she had made, "there was a right smart current in the creek-bed and the road wuz gouted out by the rain, but I hadn't fotched anything in fur a long spell and I had to pack a few leetle groceries in. No sir, I wasn't feered myself, but one

place was purty bad, and the baby hollered, and it worried me right smart when she was a-feered."

Even where there was a semblance to a road over which a wheeled vehicle might travel, the difficulties were unusually great. If two vehicles met in certain narrow passes, it was absolutely impossible to proceed. The only way out of the difficulty was to unhitch the horse from the lighter vehicle and crowd it by the other load, and then take off the contents, and even the wheels, and lift them over the other wagon, dragging the smaller vehicle sideways past the heavier load. We soon realized how such transportation difficulties completely shut these people off from the rest of the world.

The mountain-whites are of Anglo-Saxon stock and are, in the main, descendants of those courageous, Scotch-Irish, who were forced to cross the Atlantic through the blunderings of the Stuart kings. In addition there were Palatine Germans and Huguenots driven from France, and English from Virginia. Most of the pioneers had been oppressed, and had bravely sought freedom from an intolerable condition. They forged their way into these well-nigh inaccessible districts so that they might be in territory entirely unoccupied. Their descendants have inherited the same difficulties and struggles and poverty. As one writer puts it, these mountain folk have been marooned on an island of mountains, and thus have not greatly changed from those early days. Many old English words were in use that have become obsolete elsewhere.

One did not need to ask the nationality of some of them. One elderly man was having trouble in getting a pig back into her narrow and dilapidated sty. He wiped his brow and commented almost breathlessly, "They hae a maist provokin' wey o' bein' contrary.

They'll gang a' maist ony wey but the richt ane, when they tak the notion." My missionary companion did his best to drop into the mother tongue as he replied: "Aye, mon, an' I ken ye canna drive folk into the Kingdom o' God. Ye maun draw them in; try a wee bit o' corn wi ony o' yeer caperin' pigs."

The shallow soil on some of the hillside and mountains does not furnish opportunities for successful farming, and poverty and progressiveness are not usually associated. Much of the land is fertile enough to grow most of the fruits and grains found in any part of the South, but there is such a lack of transportation that there is nothing to encourage aggressiveness. One house often contains three generations and has remained unimproved in its transference from father to son and on to grandson. The houses, or shacks, are mainly of logs, and the furnishings are home-made and poor. Chickens and pigs often have as free access to the shacks as have their owners. Untidiness and dirt caused no concern on the part of some of the housekeepers whom we met. Lounging around the entrances in one almost inaccessible glen, women were smoking and chewing and spitting in the most disgusting way. Sanitary conditions were exceedingly bad. More recently, however, community centres have been opened in several districts, and provide recreation and certain social advantages that will, in time, alter the narrow outlook and inspire the inhabitants to higher achievements. But the desirable change is slow.

Illegitimacy was very common, and yet, perhaps, as one social worker said, the people are not so much immoral as without morals. Occasionally we were accommodated in bedrooms that contained as many beds as space permitted, these being occupied quite irrespec-

tive of age, relationship or sex. There were absolutely no conveniences, and one soon learns that the term "necessities" is a relative one. They knew nothing of things that we count as necessary.

The visitor's desire for a bath caused the missionary to reply that: "the very request might endanger a riot in some homes". However, when conditions seemed favorable, the subject was tactfully broached, and a sawed-down water-barrel was made available. It was "fotched" into the kitchen, and the woman of the house kindly suggested that it might be safer to "push the tabble agin the door fore you git into the bar'l so's to keep out onybody from comin' in surprise-like"; which advice was carefully followed.

Many of the children were evidently inadequately fed, and some presented as pitiable a sight as is to be found in the worst of Slumdom. It was not unusual to find families of from fifteen to twenty-four. Such schools as we saw were poorly equipped and poorly attended. In education, comforts and clothing, the people were living in a past and very rough generation, and were clearly descendants of the poorest and most illiterate pioneers.

In an old, weather-beaten cabin that we visited, lay a very sick man. It was difficult for the missionary to get to his side on account of the crowd that had gathered into the narrow room. The whole family and all the neighbours felt it their duty to remain closely around the bed; the atmosphere was positively stifling. A doctor in the district told us that most patients were terribly handicapped through this unvarying custom. All he could say would not keep them away from a friend or neighbour whom they thought might die. Unwittingly they hastened the end.

From one home, in what was the most difficult cove we had to reach, we saw a rather fine-looking girl walking along the trail. She appeared to be about eighteen years of age and possessed a splendidly-shaped head and fine physique. We spoke to her mother a few minutes later. In a rough sort of voice she said, "Oh, Ada hain't never had no chance. She orter take larnin' easy, but she looks arter the hens and wur never at school 'cept about two weeks, but schooling ain't for the likes of us pore folks up hyar I guess. Maybe she'd be right smart somewhere else, maybe she wouldn't. Anyhow, you cain't git out o' hyar 'cept a part o' the year."

In many of the remote regions of the Appalachian mountains there are numbers like Ada who "hain't never had no chance". We found it very difficult to interest them in "book larning". In their desperate struggle for bread, it seemed to them much more important that the children should know how to use the hoe and the shovel, and the weapons of the chase. How else could they exist?

All houses were of logs. The beds that were given the visitors had corn-shuck mattresses supported by cords criss-crossed from holes in the roughly-made sides and ends. They made a fair substitute for bed springs. In one home the rudely-made feather ticks did not prevent one from gradually sliding between the cords and bringing the sleeper into the position that the physical culturists call the "liver squeeze". In the morning the woman asked, "Would you folks rather have fried spuds or sowbelly?", the latter being the colloquial term for the fat bacon they constantly use. At noon we fared on corn, shucky beans, and dried apples.

Many of the settlers do not have as much as one

hundred dollars throughout the entire year. They have few things to sell, and so there is little thought given to roads, and because there is wretched transportation, there is little encouragement to produce more. A kind of sled is used summer and winter. These can be dragged over ground where wheels would be impossible.

We pulled up on one of the trails to exchange greetings with an old doctor. He gave us a good deal of information about the district, and then pointed to a shack on "Devil's Ridge", from which he had just come. He thought we should call there. Three male occupants had been the only housekeepers for years; an old grandfather, his son, in mid-life, and a grandson of twelve. The father was very ill with tubercular trouble, and such housekeeping as was attempted, was done by the crippled, emaciated old grandfather, and the under-nourished young lad. They were living in abject poverty, and for weeks there was not a solitary bit of food except corn-flour, a diet on which none of them could live healthfully. The poor old grandfather said that the boy's mother had died "when he war jest a-raisin' an' he cain't memorize her". He added pathetically that they had done their best but that their "stummicks" were "often full o' misery". We made a short visit, and left the bit of food we were carrying, — left with heavy hearts after seeing three emaciated beings who scarcely knew what a nourishing meal was like. Starving amidst the beauty and wealth of America!

In spite of their illiteracy, they possess a large measure of what we sometimes term "good horse sense". How little chance there was for them in that restricted life? Neighbours might be only a mile or two away, but to reach them might mean several hours of hard travel. All of them suffer from the remoteness caused by lack

of roads. No newspaper, or magazine, or book, was ever seen in most of the homes, and to large numbers of the people they would be of no interest except pictorially, for they can neither read nor write. They had no chance to learn. When, in a few districts, night schools were more recently started, many folks past mid-life attended, and showed remarkable aptitude in acquiring the long withheld knowledge. But the opportunities were few, as only on moonlit nights would travel be safe.

The lonesomeness of the life was explained by one of the elderly settlers: "Wa'al, thar ain't no way o' gettin' about whar all the land hes bin set up edge-like." Although such "edge-like" strips of land are cultivated, no plough could possibly be used. How they did the work even with a hoe amazed us. It is no exaggeration to say that unless a man were sure-footed and cautious he might, while cultivating his land, fall off, or out of, his field, endangering limb and life. To say that a man fell out of his field and broke his neck is only to repeat what has been recorded "up hyar" more than once. In such locations, farm implements could not be used even if available and as our informant said, even if they could raise a big crop, they had no way of "drugging" it to town.

Certain female characteristics remain the same wherever man may journey. One hospitable soul was busily engaged making "a pone o' bread". Her husband, a very reticent individual, informed us that she "orter soon fotch it in" and that she would tell us more about the district because "women's allus talkier than men."

She was a "right smart talker" and had been "borned right hyar". Of the earlier days she recalled how her father had often journeyed a mile or more over rough

ways carrying a pail or shovel in which to bring back embers from a neighbor's fire, for in her girlhood days no matches were available. Of childhood's pleasures she added, "All us littl' uns had to amuse us in them days was to prank with the kittens or dogs."

That night at "dusky-dark" we gathered twenty people into the tiny building designated as the meeting house. There was no instrument in the hall but the singing was hearty and the two visitors were so far away from any musical critics that they ran the risk of singing several duets. There was no doubt about the pleasure that the service brought the little handful of people who had gathered. The old gospel hymns and the psalms were especially enjoyed and they listened with apparent reverence and interest to the sermon. One could not soon forget the pathetic fervour with which some of the older folks joined in the singing of "The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll not want."

My companion told me of days when public gatherings, even for worship might be disturbed by young men amusing themselves by shooting at the lamp glasses. Such recklessness was gradually disappearing and with Sunday Schools being organized, a better behaved generation would grow up.

A rather curious expression was used when the leader pitched the tune too high. They would say that he started it "too shallow", i.e., not deep enough. We were entertained in the house nearest the hall. We scrambled up the "edge-like" farm to the wretched little dwelling and the two of us occupied a corner bed in the family sleeping room.

As we retired to rest our hostess held up the lantern and pointed to the "bed-kivers" and said good-natured-

ly that in case we needed more bedding, "please he'p yourself outen the pile." We were interested in these home-made quilts and were informed that they were colored from tree barks or from the hulls of black wal-nuts. She apologized for the place being a bit "ontidy" but hoped we would not be "oneeasy" and would get a night's rest for we were very welcome. The light was turned low and other members of the household occupied the remaining beds, after which the light was jerked out.

I arose early and got a wash from the only receptacle available. A tin dispan was on the floor which contained fragments of the dog's supper. I took it outside that I might wash it without embarrassing the hostess. A little later one of the children stood by my side and said timidly, "Ma wants the washdish fur the parrich." It was the only suitable vessel they had for a variety of uses. And yet in spite of some discomforts and certain unap-  
tising features, there was genuine hospitality. It was always "Come again and welcome" and the poorest of them firmly refused any compensation for our accom-  
modation. Probably their isolation has helped to pro-  
duce their sturdy independence.

As we journeyed from day to day the missionary had many incidents to narrate; some out of his own ex-  
perience and some from that of others. At the Fight Cove Sunday School a missionary enquired of a little girl whether the new baby was a boy. With a bright smile she replied quite seriously, "Yes, hit was a boy and hit's a boy yet."

In another section of his wide-spread mountainous field a day school had been started. They decided to have something quite unknown, a day of sports. The missionary was asked to assist. He planned various

events. Conferring with two of the settlers he outlined the program. One was to be an obstacle race. Would there be any trouble for them to provide the desirable "obstacles"? In a sad slow voice came the reply: "Bin hyar forty years brother an' I hain't seen nothing else; That's one thing we have a-plenty of."

A curious custom still survives regarding funeral services. Roads are often unfit to travel, and so, although interment takes place at once, the "funeral" may be postponed for weeks or months, until friends are able to gather at one centre to hear the preacher honour the dead.

In Raine's "The Land of the Saddle Bags", we are told of one man whose wife died during the winter. It was not possible to hold the "funeral" until the following fall, and unfortunately the woman's brother was in another State at that time. There were other delays, so that when it was at last possible to hold the postponed service, the bereaved husband had married again, and as the preacher, with powerful pathos, talked of the departed, the chief mourner put his head on the shoulder of his second wife and sobbed loudly over the loss of his first wife Marthy.

Here and there we found men and women who had learned much in the solitude of the woods and hills. Illy-clad and often poorly fed, and sometimes lacking in what the world calls education, they were nevertheless God's gentlefolk. They knew only One Book, and it was slow work to read its chapters, but they had learned many of its verses and its messages.

They were as open-souled and free from camouflage as human beings could well be, and for some of them we "thanked God and took courage". They are the leaven that will yet leaven the whole lump.

## CHAPTER XX.

### The “Awful Quiet” of the Farm

THE bus driver slowed up at the roadway leading to a rambling, white-painted farmhouse. “Marvin’s place” was his brief announcement that my destination had been reached. Two rows of closely-placed and stately old poplars lined the roadway,—reminders of our indebtedness to the thoughtful toilers of a past generation. To the right of the driveway was the orchard, and to the left an extensive fruit and vegetable garden with its tempting raspberry-bushes and other fruits planted as far as possible from highway robbers.

At the back of the orchard and garden stretched the balance of the hundred and twenty acres that comprised the Marvin farm.

The stranger’s appearance called forth the announcing bark of the homestead’s guardian. With a wagging tail that appeared more friendly than his bark, the long-haired sheep-dog met and investigated the newcomer, and then followed him to the house. Across the lawn a footpath with its whitened stone borders led to the porch, over which was an attractive tangle of morning-glory vines. Flanking the steps tall hollyhocks swayed in the sunshine, and on each side a bed of petunias blazed in a delightful riot of colour.

In response to the knock at the door a motherly-looking woman with graying hair and kindly eyes bade me welcome. There was no mistaking the cordiality in the grasp of Mrs. Marvin’s toil-roughened hand. She was always glad to receive a new guest, for despite their best efforts to reduce it, the mortgage on the farm was still altogether too large. Like most other folk trying

to earn a livelihood, the Marvins were passing through perilously difficult days.

An appetizing smell of newly-made bread and cake pervaded the little hall in which we stood. "You'll find it awful quiet here," said Mrs. Marvin, as she smoothed down her well-ironed apron that had just been put on, and bade me follow her to the room allotted me.

I paid no particular attention to the adjective, thinking that it had been used in the careless, customary way. The advertisement in the "Summer Resorts" column of a city daily had appealed to me. It would appeal to most men needing a rest in a quiet, rural district.

"Room and board on quiet farm, fresh fruit and vegetables, good milk and cream, chicken dinners, lovely garden and beautiful river view."

My nerves were "frazzled", and the pressure of the daily grind in a city office during a terrific heat spell that had prostrated hundreds of people, combined to make such allurements as a quiet farm, a river view and fresh fruit and vegetables almost irresistible. I had used the long-distance telephone and had engaged a room for a week. It was just the place I had long sought. My friends congratulated me on discovering what they all agreed was the ideal spot for one in my condition. Nothing was comparable to farm life. The absolute quiet was just what I needed. They knew that I was doing the wisest thing possible.

In response to my expressed desire for a room as far as possible from disturbing sounds, I was again assured that the whole surroundings were "awful quiet".

Mrs. Marvin pushed open the bedroom door, but remained in the hall herself, probably not wishing to overcrowd the quarters assigned me. Sliding my suitcase under the bed and leaning against the little bureau

that occupied the rest of the floor space, I asked for information regarding the meal hours.

"Oh, you won't need to hurry in the morning; the hired men have their breakfast at six-thirty, but the boarders don't need to have their's till eight. You'll hear both bells; the second will be yours. Dinner is as soon as we get through with the men, and supper is at six. Yes, sir, you'll find it very quiet—maybe too quiet. We had twelve people here last week, but we've only five just now; two old ladies, one's here for asthma—she's real nice; the other lost her husband about a month ago. Then there's two younger women with a fine little girl. But their rooms are upstairs.

"We always have plenty of hot water on Saturday nights. Our well isn't good this summer; we think something must have got in it; it didn't smell good so the men bring our drinking water in milk cans from a spring about a mile away, but there's lots of river-water for the bath-tub."

The "beautiful river view" was rather disappointing. At its widest the water was not over ten feet across except at the "swimming-hole", and in most places it was a mere trickle among the boulders. But it was a valuable aid in advertising. The trees, however, were at their best, and the rhododendrons, daisies and Canterbury bells bordering the lawn were delightful. Under some fine old maples with sweeping branches a hammock swung, promising lazy hours in good country air, with the droning of bees to coax one's tired brain to relax and find rest and refreshing. A little winding path straggled through the garden and ended by the snake fence, over which one climbed in order to reach the river and the swimming-hole. The thought of a week's quiet amid such surroundings was in itself soothing.

There was what an English writer calls "a homely cottage smell" about the place.

Six rooms were "spare" ones and were available for guests. Being the latest arrival the one assigned to me was the sparest. Having made good resolutions I retired early. What a blessing a really quiet night would be! For an hour or more the other guests discussed the events of the day in the nearby sitting-room, but at last quiet reigned, and, except for the chirping of the crickets, the world around seemed at peace.

I was just at that stage when one half-consciously knows that he is nearing sleep—that transitory moment when strange voices seem to come out of some other realm, from dreamland, perhaps. But at that delightful moment I was fully aroused by the banging of a door. A man with heavy tread was going down the creaking steps that led into the kitchen, which was separated from my room by a narrow pantry only. Reaching the kitchen floor, he evidently tripped over a chair. Then there was the rattling of tinware. It was one of the hired men seeking to get a drink. He had knocked the dipper off its nail. It seemed to have bounced from dish-pan to chair in its noisy route to the floor.

By the commotion and irreligious exclamations that followed it was evident that the water-seeker had no light and was trying in the darkness to retrieve the lost article. After striking several other utensils in his search for the dipper, he managed to locate it again and, using it as a feeler, at last struck the milk-can. It is amazing how much commotion can be caused by such a man in the night hours.

The drinking process over, the man having rather noisily returned to his room, I once more settled down to enjoy the "awful quiet". Something must have hap-

pened on one of the nearby farms for the sound of distant voices reached me. I sat up. So far as I could judge, men were seeking to drive a calf or cow out of forbidden territory. Mrs. Marvin's dog became concerned over the rumpus and felt it his neighbourly duty to acquaint the household that something was wrong. Other dogs in the vicinity passed on the message, and our own sheep-dog vociferously acknowledged their co-operation in the matter. If one of them took a rest another would seek to make up for the missing bark. A full hour passed before these faithful friends of man felt they might let the matter drop. By then I felt much more in need of sleep and much less likely to get it than I did on retiring. Except, however, for the distant croak of frogs, all was now quiet,—so I thought.

But I had not taken into account the "great pet" that had purred on my knee after tea. She had looked like a well-behaved and considerate cat. There was not the slightest indication that somewhere within that lovely tabby coat there lurked vocal organs that could produce the most unearthly and horrible sounds that human mind could imagine. My first thoughts were that the "fine little girl" had nightmare and was crying out in her distress. But the sound grew more terrifying, and, ere many minutes had passed, the culprit was beneath my window. After the caressing I had given her, this seemed base ingratitude. My "tss tss" were unavailing, and the serenade continued for some time.

I wondered how the other guests and Mrs. Marvin herself were enjoying the awful quiet. My watch registered 3.30. The nice lady with the asthma coughed several times. She was evidently in great distress through embarrassment of her bronchial tubes, and was trying to find her powders. Her sympathetic friend gave her

assistance and much advice—the latter reaching any others in the house who cared to listen.

Once more the flashlight told of the passing of an almost sleepless night. It was 4.15, and faint streaks of dawn were manifest, but quiet had at last settled upon Riverview Farm. Less than an hour later robins in the nearby trees began their joyful morning call. Milk pails were soon rattling, and the hired men were calling in loud voices to one another, whistling to the dog, or yelling at the cattle. Still there was hope of a quiet hour before the guests' breakfast time arrived. I pulled the blind down lower, seeking to darken the room and induce sleep. But the wood-box must be filled for the day's domestic needs. I never knew what a noisy operation that could be. The wood was evidently dropped without any attempt to shorten the distance by stooping. For each armful brought in, the screen door was allowed to bang its loudest. Then, too, the ashes must be shaken and raked from the fire-box. Perhaps some dust had been inhaled by the choreman. For five minutes there was a noisy clearing of the throat. By this time, and for this last particularly irritating disturbance I was almost ready to use unministerial language, but I still hoped for quieter moments.

The entrance to the vegetable garden was across the lawn from my window. It was there that the next noise-producing event took place. A voice was calling loudly, "Joe! where's that dog? Them blamed hogs is in the garden again." For ten to fifteen minutes shouting, barking, and squealing provided an interesting variety of sounds. I knelt at the window-sill and enjoyed the proceedings. Three pigs seemed willing, even anxious, to leave that garden at any and every place except by the regulation gateway. There was much devastation

and swearing before they were ejected. I went back to my bed, still hoping that a few minutes' sleep might yet be mine. Then a Plymouth Rock appeared on the scene. She caw-cawed incessantly until the rising bell rang. Just why a hen should make such a fuss right under my window before breakfast, Mrs. Marvin could not explain, although knowing the ignorance of the average city dweller, she informed me that all well-brought-up hens did that before laying an egg. My impression was that the old Plymouth must have intended laying eggs by the dozen that morning.

In the meantime the separator had been started, and whirred merrily in the nearby kitchen. I got up. Mrs. Marvin hoped that I had slept well. Did the quiet bother me? Sometimes it did trouble people who came from the noisy city. I rather fancy Dooley was right when he said: "Gimme the city for quiet: I know there 'r noises, Hinnissey, but they come reg'lar. The truth is the countrry is th' noisiest place in th' wurruld. Mind ye, there's a roar in th' city, but in the countrry there's th' aggrivatin' noises that beats on ye'er ear like carpet tacks bein' dhriven into th' drum."

Shortly after breakfast I took my books and papers and sat under the comforting shade of a fine old mulberry tree. There was scarcely a sound. The cat rubbed her sides along my trouser legs. She was the very picture of innocence and inoffensiveness. On the lawn the Plymouth Rock plucked grass and occasionally wiped off her beak. Not a sound escaped her. The dog lay at the kitchen door; nothing disturbed him. The pigs were contentedly feeding in their own enclosure. The hired men were working quietly in the fields. All these animate beings seemed quite happy and well behaved after I was up.

## CHAPTER XXI.

**“And Love Is All as Our Sun Dips West”**

“PAW does love his paper, don’t you, Paw?” We were sitting around the supper table after the meal. Family prayers had just ended. “Paw” was scarcely off his knees before he opened up the paper. It arrived on the mixed train in the late afternoon. As the post office was two miles from the station, the mail was not ready until nearly six o’clock. Jimmie, the hired man, otherwise homeless and friendless, usually brought it in just as supper was being served. The old farmer always took charge of it so that it would be immediately available after the “Amen” of his evening prayer.

His aged partner looked over her glasses and smiled significantly at him. “Yes, Paw sure does love his paper! I tell him he keeps one eye on it while he reads his Bible. He don’t like me to tell on him, but I mind once he knelt on it for fear one of the visitors would get it first, or maybe sneak it away while his eyes were shut. I guess they thought he was using it for a knee-pad, but I knew! Our oldest boy, Willie, says Paw knows how to watch and pray. But it was at election time when Paw knelt on the paper, and things were real exciting. Paw calls himself a strong Liberal, and he calls his neighbour, who’s on the other side of politics, a rank Conservative.”

Paw was too deeply interested in his reading to be disturbed by “maw’s” playful remarks. Only once did he glance up to give a smile and a succession of good-natured nods, and then without a word he continued his reading.

Well-nigh three-score years had passed since John Chisholm and his wife, with a small wagon-load of tools and furniture, were driven to their quarter section of almost entirely virgin soil and forest. There were only a few patches ready for cultivation in the whole district, and it was a slow job to clear off the timber in those days, when the present, quicker methods of stumping, were unknown. It needed rare courage and persistency to face the problem of how to live in the meantime.

Less than three acres had been cleared when John Chisholm and his young wife took possession. But together they had endured and toiled and built—built and re-built. For the first two years they had labored with two pairs of hands only—chopping and felling, and hewing and dragging—and betimes digging and planting.

Flour and provisions had been “packed” in on broad and willing shoulders. Margaret Chisholm had taken her full share of the work all her days, without a murmur. Those gnarled hands, and that lined and furrowed face, revealed much of the hard toil of pioneer years.

But it had been a cheerful task, for they were building a home, and there are few joys on earth like seeing a home established, when two loving souls are unitedly on the job. Every added log and board and furnishing was an additional thing of joy and beauty to them. Again and again in the twilight, when the day's work was closing, had they stood together and thankfully and admiringly gazed at their handiwork of the past twelve or fourteen hours. And then the bairns came, and more comforts were added to the shack, so that baby might not suffer. Seven young Chisholms ultimately sat

around the rough-hewn table, and as the years passed by the girls and boys were able to give a lift to those who, amid great difficulties, had toiled for them. Youthful enthusiasm wrought desirable and attractive changes to the exterior and interior of the Chisholm dwelling.

And now once again the home was childless—one by one the young folks had gone elsewhere seeking to achieve and attain. Not a boy in the lot desired to stay on the farm, and although the old parents deeply regretted the fact that the property of which every board and stone had become dear to them must ere long pass into the possession of others, they never for a moment sought to thwart the ambitions of their children who turned to other spheres of activity. And so John and Margaret Chisholm and the hired man were now the only occupants of the frame house near the Presbyterian Church on the fifth concession. John Chisholm had given the land on which the Church was built, and was its first elected elder.

At last the newspaper was laid down and spectacles were taken off. Maw hung up her dish-towels. The hired man pulled off his shoes and tilted his chair back to the wall alongside of the stove. Rover lay down on the rag mat and the cat occupied the carpet-covered sofa. We were adjusted for an evening's chat. The conversation became general. It went from crops to tariffs, from unemployment to politics, from chickens to the Anglo-Israel theory, from the hardships of pioneer days to modern labor-saving methods, from good roads to present-day religious conditions.

It was an interesting evening, but nothing impressed the visitor more than the way Maw's very plain and much-lined and furrowed face lighted up when she talked very simply of the deep things of the heart. She

knew what it was to pray, and trust, and love. Some one has spoken of such a face being like a decaying old church lighted up for worship, with windows still beautiful to look upon because of the light that is within.

And then the old folks told of the boys and girls away from home—of their struggles and successes. The photographs of grand-children were dusted off and proudly exhibited.

And that led them to talk of the days when babies were in their own home. The first had come over fifty-five years before. "I mind it was just when the roads were breaking up," began John Chisholm. "Our nearest neighbour was a mile away, and the nearest doctor lived seventeen miles over the worst roads you ever set eyes on. I got my neighbour's wife to come to the shack and then I started for the doctor. There was no paved roads then, mind you! Not even gravel. The wheels went down to the hub. I mind I broke the traces or some part of the harness four times. Didn't I have a time getting through! It took me seven hours. The old mare was all in a lather-sweat, and I guess I was too, for worrying about what might be happening back home. And say, if ever a man's heart went to his boots mine did when I found out the doctor was gone nigh twenty miles in another direction. There wasn't a doctor at every cross-roads in those days, let me tell you. Folks what have a telephone and good roads, and can call a doctor and get him in a few minutes, don't know anything about pioneer days.

"Why, I mind when old Dan Fleming met with a terrible accident there was no doctor anywhere nigh. It happened like this. He was getting over a root-fence with his scythe one day in the fall. It's always a fool thing to do. A man should put his scythe over first and

then climb the roots a bit away, 'cause you never know whether what you step on is going to break or not.'" "Now, Paw," broke in Mrs. Chisholm, smilingly, "it ain't any good giving advice about scythes and root-fences: there ain't any nowadays."

"Well," continued John, "old Dan slipped and fell on the scythe blade, and his arm was cut from the wrist to his shoulder. It was something awful. There wasn't a man or woman 'cepting his wife within three-quarters of a mile, and he was bleeding to death when he staggered into the kitchen. A doctor? Say, he couldn't a got one in a day. But mind you, old Dan and his wife had got real grit in them. Yes, sieree. They was both scared to death, and he was getting weak, but I always say that's the kind of time when real grit shows itself: yes, sieree! Dan pulled the sides of them gashes together with his other hand, and his woman sewed the whole length of his arm with a big darning-needle and that there white twine. And then she had some kind of liniment or antiseptic stuff and put it on some bedding that she ripped into bandages, and bound them as tight as she could around his arm. She got Dan some water and put him on the bed, and run most all the way to get somebody to come to the house, and somebody else to go for the doctor. She kept herself together while she did that terrible nasty job, but she was all in when it was over, and never slept a wink that whole night. It would have put anybody but a doctor out of business. It was nigh two days before the doctor could get out. He said it was too late to do anything different to what Mrs. Fleming had done, and that he'd better not disturb the bandages just then. He said Dan was going to come through all right. He did his best to fix him up and make him not feel the pain so much. I mind they

said he had tears in his eyes when he was saying good-bye. He put his hand on Dan's woman's shoulder and said, 'God bless you, Mrs. Fleming: you're a brave woman if there ever was one. If you had not done what you did, and as quickly as you did it, your good man wouldn't be here now.' Yes sir! that's what the doctor himself said. An' Dan got better, mind you. His arm was in awful shape; he could never use it quite as well as his other one, but in about a year he could do a lot of work with it. Say, it would make you half sick to see the scar, even years after—so awful deep and long.

"But I was telling you about Maw, wasn't I? Say! when I found the doctor wouldn't likely get back till the next night I was near crazy. An' there wasn't any other doctor anywhere around the district, so what was I to do?

"There was no way to telegraph and nobody had telephones in them days." John Chisholm sighed heavily as though he were passing through the experience once again. "I thought I'd go and see the minister. He'd been out to preach at our church often. When he saw what an awful fix I was in he told me he'd hitch up and try to find the doctor and hurry him through. If the doctor's horse was tired maybe they could get another.

"He thought I might as well get back home as soon as I could, and you may be sure I wanted to do just that, but I hated to go back without the doctor. I wasn't much over twenty, and I sure was anxious about Maggie. Then I mind he said, 'Just wait half a minute, Mr. Chisholm.' I could hear him and his wife talking in the kitchen. Well sir! If that woman didn't come out and say she was going back with me. I told her the roads were too awful bad for any woman to ride

over. But she just smiled and said she'd be ready in fifteen minutes. Well, sir, she got a neighbour to look after the Manse, and put some things in a little carpet bag, and we started off. Say! didn't I feel a load go off my heart when she told me she'd done quite a lot of nursing in her younger days. I pushed the old mare for all she was worth, but it was dark long before we got home. My sakes! what a rough ride that woman had. She had to hang on for dear life or she'd have gone head-first into the mud a good many times. But she was a brick—she never fussed once. And the old buckboards we used to drive in them days weren't very comfortable, I'll tell you. There was no moonlight, but we had a lantern on the dashboard, and it helped a bit. But there were some terrible mudholes, and the poor old mare was dead tired. I guess there was ten miles of the road when she was plunging around trying to get decent footing.

"Say, wasn't I glad when we turned up our lane. I was unhitching just as fast as I could, with the preacher's wife waiting for me to pilot her from the barn to the house, when I heard a woman's voice. My breath kind o' stopped, for I sure was anxious. Then I heard a bit of a laugh, and somebody said, 'Is that you, papa?' It was Mrs. Ramsay, the woman I'd left with Maw. Say! I ain't yet heard anything better'n that laugh and that word 'papa'. Not yet, I ain't." The old man's face was a picture. It seemed to reveal memories when love held full sway. "I shoved the barn door open and let old Nell go in to find a place for herself. I dropped me mud-covered coat at the kitchen door and went to the bedroom door with the two women close behind me. Say! Outside the New Jerusalem, there ain't nothing more beautiful than what I saw that night. Maw was

looking at a little, bundled-up baby that was our first-born. I can't help it if Maw is here. Her face that minute was the best picture I ever looked at. I didn't care who knew or saw what I did next. After I'd kissed Maw, I went back to the kitchen and knelt down, and with the tears running down my face I jest thanked God for His care!" The old octogenarian's face glowed at the memory of it all, and his voice was vibrant with emotion. "I mind I was that happy I could do nothing but cry for quite a spell. Then I went back to the stable and gave the old mare the best feed the barn could provide. I mind yet how I kept patting her and putting my arms around her neck. She couldn't feed properly with me a-fussing over her, but I was so glad she got us through that I had to get the gladness out of my system or I'd have blowed up." With a laugh the old man continued, "I don't know whether the old mare could think, but if she could, I guess she must have thought I was crazy, but I was that thankful I was ready to hug anything."

The baby was born about four hours after John Chisholm had started for the doctor, and Mrs. Ramsay had done for Mrs. Chisholm what another neighbour had done for her when she was in need.

"Then the minister's wife helped, and she sure knew how to do things. She stayed until the doctor came. He said everything was all right, so she went back with him. Mrs. Ramsay stayed for two nights and then she came back every morning for ten days, I guess. I tell you, sir, there ain't no neighbours like the neighbours of your struggles and sorrow. We've found that out, haven't we, Maw? Well! that's how our oldest boy, Willie, came into this world, and I've often told him he gave me as anxious a day as ever I had!"

The hired man had had no chance to take part in the narration, and had fallen asleep in his favorite corner. Maw thought it was time we all went to our rest. She lighted the "company" coal-oil lamp, and carried it to the guest-room, which opened off the living room. As she placed it on the bureau she pointed to a tin-type in a broad plush frame. "That's Willie's picture," she said. "Most of these other pictures are of our children and grandchildren."

"This isn't one of your boys," said the visitor with a smile, as he took up the photograph of a young Asiatic wearing a fez. "No, not exactly," was the reply, "although he used to call me 'mother'. He's an Armenian. My! what that poor boy came through! His folks were mostly all killed because they were Christians. He saw some of them burned to death. He said they were trapped in a church by Turkish soldiers. If any of them tried to get out they were shot or stabbed to death. The soldiers poured oil all around the building and set fire to it, and burned them like rats in a trap. This boy escaped somehow and walked hundreds of miles, and then worked his way part of the journey, sometimes travelling as a stowaway, till he got to Canada. He wanted to learn farming, and one of the church secretaries wrote to our minister, and the minister spoke to John. That's how it came about. After he learned to speak English pretty well he told us all about the persecutions and about his escape. It made your blood run cold to think men could be so awfully cruel."

"My! but he was funny when he was learning to speak English. He was real quick at picking up new words though. I thought Paw would die laughing one night when one of our neighbours and his daughter dropped in just to pass the time of day. Sam, as we

called the boy, was getting on well with his English, and could talk pretty good, and we loved to hear him. He had been looking at the girl most of the time, and as Paw said, she wasn't hard to look at, for she had a good face and beautiful complexion. Well, mind you, when there was a let-up in our chatter, Sam said quietly, 'Let me please tell you, Miss Ramey, what a lovely hide you've got.' That morning the men had killed a heifer, and some of them was fixing the hide for the buyer. Sam had learned the word and thought it would apply to a woman's skin just as well as to a cow's.

"Then another time he told one of the best singers in the choir that she sang like a fowl. Sam sure got a lot of teasing about that too. None of us could understand why he said it, but it seems he knew the German word for bird, and because it sounds a little like 'fowl' he thought he was complimenting her by saying she sang like a fowl." Her husband's voice stopped further reminiscence.

"All right, Paw, I'm coming," she answered to his kindly question as to whether she was going to keep the preacher up all night. "Goodnight, sir."

Most of the furnishings of the room were old-fashioned, but everything was clean and comfortable. The carpet and quilt were made in the adjoining room by Mrs. Chisholm and her girls. Two coloured flower texts were over the bed—"God is our Refuge and Strength", and "Underneath are the Everlasting Arms". The Sunday wardrobes of the old couple were behind a white cotton curtain near the head of the bed.

But it is of a morning drive by his wholesome old host that the writer desires most to tell. Possibly but for it he might have forgotten his visit with the Chisholms. The old man had asked if he would visit an

elder who had been blind for some years. As they drove in his wobbly and rather antiquated buggy, John Chisholm grew reminiscent again. There was plenty of time, for the horse was exceedingly slow. The almost constant clicking of his owner's tongue, the customary "git up", and the jabbing of a whip-stump that had been greatly worn down by constant use, made little impression on "Doll". Her indifference to the efforts to increase her pace brought to mind the passage, "None of these things move me."

The conversation had turned to Maw and far-away days. And then to days of wooing and wedding. "I mind the day I led her to the altar: it'll be fifty-seven years come the third of September," he said very deliberately. "I mind she wore a gingham dress, and I thought she was the prettiest girl in all Canada." He let the reins drop loosely on the dashboard, and turning his face fully toward his visitor he said, with a defiant emphasis to which no peace-loving man would dare have raised objection, "and I think she is yet."

Dear old John Chisholm! If by some chance this book should fall into the hands of one of those seven who were privileged to call him father, this picture, quite inadequately sketched, will nevertheless be easily recognized. May it be the grateful tribute of the one who that day on the fifth concession thought of a deeply furrowed face, of reddened and gnarled and 'common' hands: furrowed and reddened and gnarled and made common in glad service for husband and children and God.

What a pity the printed page cannot convey looks and tones and inflections. "I thought she was the most beautiful girl in all Canada"—fifty-seven years, many of them pioneering years—hard, hard toil—motherhood

and its consequent daily sacrifice—twelve years of caring for babies—a lifetime of service for those whom God had given her, and whom she had never ceased to love. After well-nigh three-score years, Margaret Chisholm was, to the outsider, a plain, wrinkled old woman. To John Chisholm she was still "the prettiest girl in all Canada."

"And love is all as our sun dips west."

## CHAPTER XXII.

## Other Little Ships

LOOKING over his mail that November morning, the preacher was puzzled for a few moments as he studied the handwriting on one of the envelopes. There was something remotely familiar about it that caused him to hold it for a moment. It seemed to link itself with the past in some way. Perhaps it was the dreary atmospheric condition of the day that helped its identification. In his student days he had spent a weekend in just such a raw November, beside the cheerful blaze of a huge stone fireplace, in the comfortable home-circle of Bob Nicholson, a college chum whom he had not seen for years. Here was his old friend writing to him from a little Ontario town some distance away.

" . . . But I have not lost track of you, my dear fellow," he wrote, "for I have kept a close watch on your comings and goings, and if you can lend a hand to a needy old comrade, I shall be more than grateful. Have been asked to supply for next Sunday in the town of W—, and it is important that I go. Will you take my pulpit? Unfortunately the Manse will be closed, for my wife is acting the part of nurse in her old home, but Mother Bentley, one of my flock, and one of God's elect, will take good care of you and will certainly make you welcome. The Bentleys have little of this world's goods, but are rich in the best things of life, and are a simple and very kindly old pair. They have had more than their share of trouble, and, knowing your propensity for studying types of human nature, I feel sure you'll find them interesting, and I know you can help

them." There were some personal messages relating to the old days and to college pranks, which set memory's bells chiming so happily that the preacher had not the heart to refuse the request, even though he had only just returned from a trip to the north country to find his desk piled with matters demanding immediate attention.

As he alighted from the train late on Saturday afternoon, an elderly man of medium height, with nervous movements, stepped from the little group of unoccupied folks that usually awaited the arrival of the "Mail". Hesitatingly he asked, "Are you the preacher Mr. Nicholson asked me to meet? Glad to see you, sir. I'm David Bentley, Dave for short. We're going to look after you. We're just plain folks, but you're surely welcome."

The old car rattled along rather uncertainly for a few blocks, and apparently needed continual coaxing, for Dave seemed to adopt all auxiliary aids for keeping "Lizzie" going. By turns he talked persuasively and reprovingly. At last they jerked to a stop before a small white house close to the street. It was a plain, rough-cast old dwelling, with one window close to the corner on the front, and another in the same position on the side. Approaching the house along the three-plank-wide village walk, it reminded one of the features of a human face, with the window-eyes watching the passers-by. Over the narrow verandah, on the farther side, the viney still hung, blackened with early frosts. The chill of mid-November lay over and about all out-of-doors. But some people know how to open a door cheerily, and when Mrs. Bentley's large, motherly form appeared, weariness and weather were forgotten in the warm welcome and home-like atmosphere of her humble, but thoroughly hospitable dwelling.

Mrs. Bentley had rather a fleshly burden to carry, and appeared as if it were quite an undertaking to get herself properly clothed. Her lace collar was a bit askew, and there seemed to be some needed re-adjustment around the waist band, but there was no mistaking the sincerity of the keen gray eyes that twinkled merrily behind her spectacles. The simple couple soon lost all their reticence at meeting a stranger, and conversation never lagged for a moment. It centred primarily about the family, now gone from the old home. Tragedy and sorrows a-plenty had crossed the well-worn threshold of the little white house, and their faith had been sorely tried. But they could still laugh together as they recalled incidents of the old days when the rooms were filled with noisy chatter and the good-natured scrambling of their mischievous boys, whose frequent raids on the cookie-jar in the pantry kept cookie-making an almost daily affair.

Of their four children only one now remained, a married daughter living far away from the old home. The father pointed to a coloured crayon enlargement. "That's Alistair." Alistair, a lad of thirteen, while earning a bit of money during his summer holidays, had been struck by a train as he was crossing the tracks on his bicycle. Twenty minutes after he had left the house with a pocket full of his mother's cookies, he was carried in. He had been instantly killed. "How we missed him and his merry ways! And we still miss him! Yes, every day." Another son, James, had gone to the War with the Medical Corps. "All along in his school days he had wanted to be a doctor," said Mrs. Bentley. "I remember once when he was in High School, he left a bottle of carefully preserved specimens of dissected frogs and other horrid stuff in a dark corner of the pantry where

he thought they'd be out of the way, and our daughter Peggy, in her usual last-minute dash getting the supper ready, supposed the bottle contained her favorite kind of pickles. She emptied the contents into a china bowl and started to put it on the table. Just as she got to the dining-room, she noticed what the dish contained, and dropped it quick as lightning and screamed at the top of her voice. My! how she scared us! Jim was upstairs, but when he heard the commotion, he came running down. Say! but wasn't he vexed! He began to frantically scoop up the horrid mess from the kitchen floor, with Peggy all the while giving him fits with her hot tongue. Jim was excited and angry too. What with those two going for each other and Sandy barking, as he always did when there was lots of other noise, well, we certainly had bedlam let loose that night.

"Ah, well," she sighed, "we'd be glad to have bedlam again! It wasn't so very long after that, about four years, I guess, till Jim went away to the War and never came back. He was trying to fix up a wounded enemy. They say that he thought the poor fellow was dying, and as Jim turned to get another dressing the wounded man rolled over, reached his gun and shot him through the back of his head. But as Dad says, there were so many bitter things said during war-days that it may not be true. Some sniper may have done it. And if Jim was being merciful to a dying enemy then that's all the more to his credit. But thank God he didn't suffer like some did: he died right away—my golden-haired laddie!" Tears choked her voice, and neither of the others broke in on her sad narration.

After a few minutes she continued, "My faith almost left me then. It seemed too cruel. Why should such a thing come to us? We had had our share of trouble

already; it seemed all wrong, and I grew hard and cold for awhile. I didn't want to see folks at all. I neither wanted to help anybody nor to be helped. I wouldn't even see our old minister when he called. I guess poor Dad had his hands full enough with me acting like that and all the rest that he had to bear. And then, somehow, I came to see things differently. I heard of another woman in our town whose only boy had brought a terrible disgrace on the family. They tried to hush it up, but you know how things like that spread. For awhile he seemed to be all right, but one day he forged a cheque and then stole a car to get away, hoping the police wouldn't find him. But he was caught near Montreal, and today he's in the penitentiary. His father didn't help the poor lad any. Our Dobson used to say that his mother brought him up and his father brought him down. Well, I began to think it all over, and knew that I should be thankful our boys were not that way. When I thought of how they had lived, and how they died, I felt ashamed of the way I had acted. God forgive me! It was a blessed gift to have the dear lads as long as we did."

Father Bentley continued to tell of other family sorrows. The eldest son, who had been a very bright student, "was named Dobson after an uncle of mother's, the Rev. Campbell Dobson, a minister of the Auld Kirk in Scotland. We hoped Dobson would enter the ministry. He was a good talker, and they said he made the best impromptu speeches of any boy in the school. He did well in all his subjects. Then he taught classics in a western University and wrote a lot of articles for different magazines. He was just in his 'forties' when he took pleurisy. There didn't seem to be anything they could do for him. One day they telegraphed us that his

condition was serious. Mother and I left the next morning, but it was almost a three-day journey, and when they met us at the station, we knew that poor Dobson was gone. It was heart-breaking to feel that we were too late—just three hours too late.

"So you see, sir, we've lost them all except Peggy and her family, and we don't see them very often, as they live in Alberta, and it costs a good bit to travel that far, and we find it hard to go on long journeys at our time of life. Some days it seems as if we can scarcely bear all that has come upon us. There is a terrible lonesomeness at certain times, but we try hard to think it must have all been for the best, so we struggle on. Thank God, we've got one another.

"Where's that bit of poetry you read last night, mother? Yes, that's it." He handed the clipping to his guest. It consisted of four stanzas. A line that Dave especially liked ran

"And love is all as our sun dips West."

The poem ended with—

*"Then let us clasp hands as we walk together  
And let us speak softly in love's sweet tone,  
For no one knows on the morrow, whether  
We two pass by, or but one alone."*

Mrs. Bentley rose from her chair. "I'm afraid we've been tiring you, but we'll leave you alone while Dave does his chores and I get the supper. Maybe you'd like to see the village paper; it's not much of a sheet. The poor old man that edits it does most of the typesetting himself, and he does make some awful mistakes. He's got in about you preaching, but your name isn't spelled right. I guess he can't see very well. They say that one time he put an item in about the church win-

dows being very dirty, and that they were going to have a 'bee' and give them a thorough cleaning so's they'd look nice for the Anniversary. He left the 'n' out of 'windows', so you may be sure the church widows got some queer looks that day. People just couldn't help keeping up the joke. They say two of the women didn't come to the services at all. Then another time he put in that owing to the Sunday School having such a long and good programme of sports at their annual picnic, three 'deaths' had been postponed for a week."

The visitor found the Barryville Chronicle quite as amusingly interesting as Mrs. Bentley's narration had suggested. Some of the writers of the atrocious obituary poetry deserved thirty days' imprisonment. The following is quite up to the average of the "In Memory" rhymes that the Chronicle also contained:

"Our dear wife and mother, Hattie Snow,  
Left us just one year ago,  
And now our cup is filled with woe,  
Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

After the evening meal, with its wholesome fare, the guest and the Bentleys went into the little sitting-room. Father Bentley brought the well-worn Book from its place on the centre table. It had evidently been a constant source of spiritual food and of consolation. The old couple, in many a sad and trying hour, had sought and found solace from its unfailing Source.

Retiring early for study and rest, the preacher settled down in the guest-room. It was very small, and there was little space for movement on account of the huge sleigh bed. It had boxed-in springs and an enormous feather mattress. It was so high that it had the appearance of having "risen" like a giant loaf of bread in a

tin. A large, old-fashioned bureau and washstand, and a comfortable, antique chair, completed the furniture. Several coloured prints and a faded sampler, with its patient stitches made by youthful fingers of other days, were crowded on the walls. A number of much-used books bearing such familiar titles as "Scottish Chiefs", "Ivanhoe", and "Tales of the Borders", filled the odd-looking corner shelves. A carpet-covered footstool, evidently used for climbing into the high bed, stood over a stove-pipe hole leading from the parlor below. The warm air rising from the wood-fire crackling briskly in the great box-stove around which the Bentleys and some friendly neighbours were still sitting, was very welcome.

An hour or so later there came a tap at the door, and the hostess appeared bringing an extra comforter and a glass of hot milk. "I was afraid you might not have enough bedding," she said, "and Dave thought that maybe you'd like a warm drink. Some preachers think a glass of milk helps them to sleep. Our Dobson used to love his bowl of bread and milk. Good-night, sir! we're looking forward to a good day tomorrow."

During the preparations for retiring, one of the visitor's slippers dropped from his hand and fell through the stove-pipe opening. It was apparently timed just right, for it fell on the head of a neighbour who was stating that he must be going home. An apology was called down the stove-pipe hole by the necessarily invisible guest. With a hearty laugh Dave called back, "I was just telling him it was a good thing there wasn't a foot in it." Mrs. Bentley apparently enjoyed the incident. At the breakfast table she looked a bit suspiciously at her visitor, and with twinkling eyes said, "You know that's the kind of thing our Jim loved to do; he was

always playing pranks." The preacher assumed a dignity that squelched the insinuation.

Mrs. Bentley continued with a smile, "I used to scold him a bit sometimes, but really, he was cute, and I think it don't hurt a boy—nor a minister either—to have a mischievous streak in him. Once when the Presbytery met in our church there was an awful mix-up in their coats and hats. They had used the Sunday School hall for a cloak room. When they were through the morning session and were rushing off for dinner to the different homes, they had what Jim called 'a high old time'. Hats that looked alike had been changed, and gloves put into wrong pockets, and mufflers shifted around so that when they started to put them on, in the hall, and in the vestibule, and some on the street, there was the awfulest confusion and collisions of preachers coming and going that you ever saw. Some of them were awful mad and used pretty strong language, but others just laughed about it. I never suspected Jim, but one night about a week later he told me he slipped into the schoolroom and did it just for fun. I tried to look shocked, but I'm afraid I didn't succeed very well."

The quaint little stone church was comfortably filled that morning. There was a simple message on being "passers-on". "He gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes."

Mr. Bentley did the talking on the homeward journey. He was an appreciative soul. "It does us good, sir, to be told we can all have a part in passing on what the world needs: the Bread of Life. We had a sermon a bit like it in some ways from Mr. Nicholson a while ago. I've clean forgotten the text, but it was something about little ships. I mind he said they had their purposes as well as the bigger craft, and they could make just as

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good voyages and prove equally seaworthy, and so on. He said some of us should just be contented to be the little ships, for we can't all be the big ones." Dave was silent a moment, and then went on doing a little preaching on his own account. "Maybe some of us don't show up as well as others, but I guess the Lord knows how to use us just the same, if we'll let Him. A rowboat can do things and go places where an ocean liner can't, was what John Murray, our elder, said.

"The trouble is lots of the smaller fellows aren't satisfied to do their own jobs. They're always fussing around criticizing the bigger fellows. They keep telling folks what they'd do and say if they were at the head of things, and how they'd run the country, and the kind of laws they'd make and, yes sir, the kind of sermons they'd preach too. A bit ago I read in our church paper that the fellows that can run a paper, or run a church, or manage a war, are always in some other position, and so aren't available for the job about which they know so much. I thought that was a pretty good punch between the eyes for some folks. Some of that kind make me think of the old rooster Benny Smith owned once. He got so fond of hearing himself crow that each day he'd go at it a bit harder, till one day, as he perched a little too near the edge of the shed roof, he overbalanced, and with a frightened squawk toppled off into the rain-barrel and drowned himself. Sometimes I think it's a pity these squawker fellows can't be squelched like the rooster. It would be a good joke on them if somebody would take them up on their boasting and give them the big job they think they know all about. Guess they'd feel as foolish as they sound before they were through. We've got one or two of that kind in our church. One of them had been shouting pretty

badly and scolding everybody but himself in the prayer meeting. On the way home Mrs. Bentley said he made her tired! He reminded her of a man our preacher once told us about. He was always telling others to throw out the lifeline, but wasn't willing to throw out a clothes-line to help his own hard-working wife.

"Yes, sir, that's a mighty comforting thought about the little ships," said Dave, reverting to Mr. Nicholson's sermon, "and it helps me lots of times when I think of it. I often wish I could do things a bit different. You see, it's this way with Mother and me; we haven't much to come and go on, so we can't give very much to the church, and missions, and such things, but we try to do what we can. Of course it makes a difference with the boys all gone. They might have done a lot for us, but then I know we ought to be thankful for the memories we have of them, and for the kind of boys they were; they might have given us lots of trouble; but it's fine to be able to remember them as good Christian lads. That's better than anything else they could have left us.

"Well, here we are! home again! I've been rambling on like a house a-fire, and never gave you a chance."

Mother Bentley soon had the meal on the table. Just as they were starting to eat, a knock at the door brought an unexpected guest. One of the host of unemployed was asking for help. The hospitable old mother whispered at the dining room door, "Would you mind if he sits down with us? he says he's hungry; he looks all right. Come right along," she urged, "we're just beginning; the more the merrier. You can wash up a bit in the kitchen. I'll get another plate and Dad will go on serving while you fix up." The wanderer along the endless highways seemed slightly embarrassed, and

protested that the woodshed would be all right for him. Ere many minutes, however, he was quite at ease and became communicative. He laughed rather wearily when the host asked him to what place he was heading. "Any place; one's as good as another, when you're tramping. I once read that a tramp was a man who was walking every day to no place. That's where I'm heading for."

He told of his early home that was now gone, and of his lost position and subsequent "hard luck". Through no fault of his own he had fallen on evil days. The firm for which he had worked had been compelled to close its doors. He had sufficient in the bank to save him from any immediate anxiety, and felt quite sure he could find another position. But as he started to seek a job he discovered that most firms were discharging employees, and not one did he find requiring help. At last his money was gone, and the woman with whom he boarded could not keep him. She needed the room rent to augment her own meagre resources.

He showed us the pawn-tickets for his Sunday suit and his watch. They had realized enough to allow him to retain his room a few weeks longer. Then he had slept in the parks. His clothes became worn and soiled, making him appear less desirable as a possible employee. From constant tramping and inadequate care and lack of rest, his feet became so swollen that for a while he could not remove his shoes. Again and again as he tried to get into some wash-room to get a clean-up, he was ordered out. At last he was compelled to beg. The suit he was wearing was that of a man who had committed suicide through financial worries. A relative had been glad to dispose of it.

Twice he had been handed over to the police by

men who had cursed him for being on their property. "That's what galls you, by jinks," he said, almost fiercely. "The men who have the wealth that we helped to create for them treat us as if we were mud when times get bad. Seems too often as if they were only interested in us while they can many money by our labours." A gentle protest was made at the too general condemnation. "Oh, I know, sir, there are lots of decent employers who have kept their men on when it didn't pay them to do so, but lots of others let the men do all the suffering and the bosses got their trips to Florida or Europe same as ever, and gave up mighty few of their regular luxuries. I never knew how an unemployed man could suffer until this last year; just to tramp day after day, and week after week, and month after month, and to feel you're not wanted anywhere, and that everywhere you go you are regarded as of no account. God! That's what hurts, especially when you know you could make good if you could get half a chance."

Only once in a while had he received any encouraging word. He had become well-nigh hopeless, for there seemed no chance to get an honest living and pay his own way. As Mother Bentley listened her eyes became moist, and if her house had possessed the roominess of her heart, it is doubtful whether the stranger would have continued his journey for some weeks. What a search she made for socks and shirts and shoes, and ties and collars! Facilities were also provided for a thorough clean-up, which the unknown guest seemed to appreciate above all else. The Bentleys were exemplifying the spirit of the one who desires to "live in a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man."

Before he departed, the preacher saw the motherly soul laying a hand upon the shoulder of this knight of

the road who was some other mother's boy. Doubtless she was saying an encouraging word as he was setting out once more on the unknown and hard way. He had assured his friends, as they clasped his hand in farewell, that he felt "a whole pile better" and "with God's help" he'd pull through. James Whitcomb Riley's homely verses were recalled:

*"When a man hasn't a cent and is feeling kind of blue,  
And the clouds hang dark and heavy and won't let the sun-  
shine through  
It's a great thing, boys, for a neighbor just to lay  
His hand upon your shoulder in a friendly sort of way.*

*It makes a man feel curious, it makes the teardrops start,  
And you feel a kind of fluttering in the region of your heart!  
You can't look up and meet his eyes, you don't know what  
to say,  
When his hand is on your shoulder in a friendly sort of way.*

*This world's a curious compound with its honey and its gall,  
Its care and bitter crosses, but a good world after all,  
And a good God must have made it, leastways that is what  
I say,  
When a hand is on my shoulder in a friendly sort of way."*

The preacher's stay in the little white house had come to an end. His faith in human nature had been rekindled in its atmosphere of simple helpfulness. Early next morning as he waited on the station platform for the train to take him back to the city, he regretfully said goodbye to his kindly host. Tears stood in the old man's eyes as he grasped his hand and said he hoped he'd be back again some time. "It's been a real help, sir, and it's cheered us both up a lot just to talk to you about our troubles. We'll hope to see you again some day, but if we shouldn't"—there was an upward look,

and the preacher knew what the unfinished sentence implied.

So move the Bentleys of this world, each filling a small place in the community's life, giving of their best as occasion may demand and their circumstances permit, lending a hand to someone less fortunate than themselves, yet winning no plaudits from the multitude. In the old man's words, they may be just "little ships", but they are making a brave voyage, and possessing the true Chart and Compass, will ultimately come safely into Port.

### CHAPTER XXIII. How Luz Became Bethel

IT was in the early years of the writer's ministry. The Manse guest-room, which he was to occupy over the week-end, was all one could desire, and indeed the whole house had an atmosphere of good-will and comfort and peace. Indeed, any house would have had all these if occupied by the Rev. Grant McLay and his cheery, hospitable wife. The dwelling reflected the character of its God-fearing and man-loving occupants.

It happened that after the Sunday evening service, I met in another home a man who had occupied the same guest-room less than two weeks before. He told me some few things that night, and many other things on a later occasion. Two weeks before I met him, he had cried out in bitterness of soul, "God! I might as well be dead!" He was lonely, penniless, hopeless, hard. He had wandered many miles, scarcely knowing or caring to know aught but that he was hungry, and despised, and an outcast. The day would probably end as many others had ended—the vagrant's cell.

But what mattered! His half-starved family neither heard, nor cared to hear from him, any longer. Sin had left him in wretched solitude, and his ruin seemed almost complete. He had beaten his way for a few miles on a freight train, and had called on an old village minister to see if he could get a meal, or maybe money enough for a bed. And the old minister, who was known to be "easy", gave a welcome to this hopeless wanderer, and after providing a good meal talked kindly and tactfully until sympathy touched the vagrant's heart and at last loosened the vagrant's tongue.

It was a story of liquor and lost jobs, increasing disgrace and at last abject poverty. The head hung low. Full of bitter remorse and hopelessness as to the future were the words, "It's no use! God! I might as well be dead!"

A hand was laid kindly on his shoulder—and the touch of a friendly hand may be a divine act. So far as he could remember no one had ever touched him in kindness; a policeman's arresting grip was the only hand-grasp he had known in a score of years. He had never been spoken to except in terms and tones of disgust and contempt, and now a man was calling him "friend". "I've lived longer than you have, my friend, and I too have known much of sin and sorrow, but I've also known much of a Saviour and of a Comforter. I wonder if you know much of Him? Perhaps you have not understood Him. I am sure that blessed Saviour can and will make a true man of you if He gets a chance. But you must be willing to give Him the chance."

There was silence a few moments, and then the old minister continued cheerfully, "But you need a rest, and we can fix you a bed right here. Indeed, I think the guest-room is all ready, so it will be no trouble." He opened his study door. "Clara!" "Yes, dear," answered a mellow, kindly voice that had a quality about it that betokens the loving heart. "Is the guest-room ready? I have a friend here." "Why, yes, Grant: who is the guest?" An introduction, and a quiet welcome from Clara McLay, followed. The old minister turned to the wanderer. "Yes, yes, you'll stay the night with us, and we can have a chat later. I have to make a call, but I'll be back soon. Perhaps you'd like to take a walk and think things over, or you can stay right

here, if you'd rather. No! no! this house is not too good for any man who needs a friend. You'll come back here for tonight."

With confused thoughts and yet with a glimmer of light on his beclouded mind, the lonely vagrant walked away from the Manse, he hardly knew whither. A few minutes later he stood looking at a dilapidated, doorless shack. He scarcely knew why he crossed the rotting doorsill, but he wanted to be out of sight. In the solitude of that eventide he dropped on his knees and uttered a cry that only God could understand. Speaking of it some years later, he said, "I knew I had made a horrible mess of life, but I tried to thank God that there was one man in the world who believed I could yet be decent. God knows I speak the truth when I say that I never knew until that night that there was that kind of Christianity in the world. The old minister loved me. I'm sure he did, though I was a dirty wreck." And the dilapidated building was no longer the tumble-down shack, but Bethel, for therein God met him.

Thrice since those memorable days this man has heard a voice—"Arise, go to Bethel", and has journeyed back over many miles to the place that means something more to him than it does to any other person. He always looks up gratefully at the window of the Manse guest-room, and recalls the cordiality of the Rev. Grant McLay and his kindly wife, both of whom have passed to their abundant reward. He also walks by the spot upon which stood the ramshackle old shack, in which for him the new day dawned,—the day that is God's supreme gift to the soul that had been in darkness.

Not long since he said to his minister friend, as they sat in his own neat little home, "I often tell my wife that we may have to do without some other trips, but

we've got to go back to the old village once in a while.  
It's hallowed ground to me."

Other people may call the place Luz, but as in the experience of Jacob of old, it will ever be to him the House of God, for there he awakened to a different world. The place reminds him of the God who answered him in the day of his distress, and who vouchsafes His presence until life's journey ends.

*"And he called the name of the place Bethel."*

## Facing His Maker Once a Day

### CHAPTER XXIV.

THE Programme Committee of the Rotary Club had requested an address "on any phase of Social Service effort dealing with your own work among the under-privileged and unfortunate". Subsequent correspondence gave the information that Mr. and Mrs. Edward Mowat had "requested the privilege" of entertaining the speaker.

The President and Secretary of the Club met the morning train on the date arranged and introduced their guest-speaker to his hostess, who stepped from the comfort of a Rolls Royce to add a charming greeting to the welcome already given. "Mr. Mowat is so sorry not to be able to meet you, but he says his arthritis is behaving very badly these days, so he asks to be excused, but he is so pleased you are to be with us." There was a most winsome culture about Mrs. Mowat and the visitor knew at once that his place of entertainment would be one of refinement and comfort.

The liveried chauffeur gave attention to every detail of his service and the guest settled back into the luxurious upholstery as though it were his daily custom to ride in a ten-thousand-dollar Rolls Royce. Twenty minutes later the Lodge gates were swung open and the car entered one of the most picturesque estates in Ontario. A quarter of a century before, a man of wealth and of vision had looked from the beautifully-wooded slopes along the lake shore and was enraptured at the natural charm of woods and lake and islands, and had seen the possibilities for a palatial residence amid glorious surroundings. Two of the best landscape gardeners

had been brought from England to lay out the spacious grounds. The artistry that had resulted from the skilful working out of their plans, coupled with careful manual labour, seemed to be perfect.

The rather seriously crippled host was awaiting the car's arrival as it swung around the crescent and stopped between the imposing pillars of the mansion's main entrance. His greeting was as kindly as that of his wife. Within the mansion all that the mind and hand of man could furnish seemed to have been brought together to meet every demand of the most artistically and luxuriously inclined. Mrs. Mowat said quietly, "Before you go to your room you must see our perpetual bit of sunshine. Ronald, poor little chap, has not been able to play around since he was four years old—a spine trouble for which we have not been able to get any real help." A pale little face lighted up joyously at the sight of mother, and a frail hand was lifted to the visitor's. Mr. Mowat had hobbled to the bedroom door, and it was obvious that Ronald's room was the most magnetic of the many that the mansion contained.

"And now to your room," said Mrs. Mowat, cheerily. "You will have an hour's quiet before you need to leave for town. The Rotary is making this an open meeting, so I am having the pleasure of accompanying you."

Up the spacious stairway and along the luxuriously carpeted hallway the visitor was conducted. Mrs. Mowat pushed open one or two of the several guest-room doors to give opportunity for seeing the beauty of the estate and its surroundings. "I think I shall give you Paul's old room. We've turned it into one of our guest rooms because we think the outlook is so attractive. Paul loved to sit at the casement window when he was studying. We've left some of his pictures just

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where he hung them himself." There was a pause, and as she turned to leave the room, she said with a sigh, "It is almost three years since he left us." The guest knew that a tragic sorrow lay behind that sigh.

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On the return journey from the Rotary luncheon, and as the Lodge gates opened, Mrs. Mowat asked the chauffeur to drive "through the pines". At the end of the avenue she suggested a walk over the grounds and then to the lake shore. From the rustic seat of a cosy nook on the estate's highest point, the visitor and his hostess looked across the bluish-green water to a dozen or more islands. In the privacy of the lovely seclusion, the sorrow of the Mowat mansion was revealed.

Paul had been the joy of the home. School-days in the nearby town passed happily, and each night found him contentedly at his studies. Then came the time for his entering university—a time of mingled anxiety and anticipation. The thought of the home without Paul brought many a heartache, but there were high hopes for his future. Holidays came with joyous re-union. On one vacation Paul brought two college chums back with him and they spent happy days golfing and yachting and fishing. After one motor trip to a social function in a distant city the mother thought she detected a smell of liquor in Paul's room, but she tried to convince herself she had been mistaken.

That autumn Mr. Mowat received a letter from the people with whom Paul boarded, stating how regretfully they were sending the word but that they wished he would make other arrangements for Paul's accommodation, as he frequently had liquor in his room. They had spoken kindly about it to the boy himself, but evidently he was in with a little group that made a practice of

having "a friendly glass" in each other's rooms, and he was not disposed to accept their counsel. Much as they desired to have him remain with them, it had been a lifelong principle not to have intoxicants beneath their roof, and they could make no exception.

"Father could not go," said Mrs. Mowat, "and so I made the journey. It was a sorrowful time for me, and I learned much that I wish I might never have known. The ultimate result was that Paul came home, but he never again had his old-time contentment. His father tried to interest him in his own profession, but the boy was restless. Then he became more and more addicted to liquor drinking. He got it in spite of our best efforts to keep him from it. Watchfulness, provided in the best ways we knew to happily occupy his time, pleading, prayers—all seemed in vain.

"One night he came home much the worse for liquor. Father had had a hard day at his desk and was also suffering a good deal. He spoke more harshly to the boy than he had ever done before, and without any warning, Paul struck his father. I did not know what had come over him, although I have learned some things since. That terrible night seems like an awful nightmare. How could our Paul have done that? He was so winsome as a lad, everybody liked him."

With a deep sigh she continued: "I followed him upstairs, for he at once left the library after striking his father, but before I could enter his room—the room you are in—he had locked the door. At that hour of the night I dare not make too much noise. I rapped quietly and whispered lovingly, pleading with him again and again to let me in, but he paid no attention. At last I went downstairs. Father was in his chair and almost lying across the library desk with his face buried in his

arms. He seemed thoroughly exhausted. I could not say a word, but just stood there with my hand upon his shoulder. At last I asked him if he were hurt where Paul struck him. Without lifting his head, he said, 'No, mother, he didn't hurt my head, but he struck my heart —Oh God! it's broken.'

"For an hour, I think, he lay there, and I stood alongside of him. It seemed as if all the beauty and light had disappeared from our home—our home over which we had planned and schemed that it might be, as father said, 'the last word in comfort and cheer and good taste'. It seemed to have lost all its charm in a gloom that penetrated to our very souls. In the morning Paul took a car, presumably to drive to town, but he never came back."

A sad narration of forgeries and imprisonments followed. Twice the father had journeyed to get Paul out of jail. Once the lad had seemed so penitent and had promised so earnestly that he would faithfully stand by his father in his professional interests that he was given a position of trust. Inside of six months he defrauded his forgiving parents four times.

"He had become a drug addict," added the sorrowing mother. "They say it isn't a habit-forming drug, and it is advertised so widely as being harmless, but we know it helped to ruin our boy. He used to take the tablets by the half dozen, and we could never trust his word after that time. The last we heard of him he was in the Crow's Nest Pass with some former college chum." She lifted her eyes to the beauties around her. "Father has spent nearly half a million on this lovely spot, and a year or two after we found it we lost our boy. You would not notice it perhaps, for Mr. Mowat is very brave, but I saw him enter on a sorrowful old age within a week after Paul ran away. Little Ronald

is our sheet-anchor. When father's heart grows hard and resentful, that frail little arm around his neck seems to melt him into forgiveness again. We still pray and hope."

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In the guest room that night a heart was uplifted in yearning to the Throne of Grace, yearning for a wandering boy in the Great West Land. The next day letters were on their way to three or four missionaries, asking them to seek to locate Paul Mowat.

Weeks passed. One morning's mail brought the following:

"At last I have at least a little information about your boy Paul Mowat, although it is not as satisfactory, nor as complete, as I might wish. He was at Kimberley for a while, and then in Nelson. Where he is now nobody seems to know. He forged a cheque on his father's name at C---, and that is how we came to locate him. The judge told me that his father honoured the cheque and got the boy off. The better news is this: He started to go over the Cascade mountains with a party of Ontario prospectors about a week ago. They stayed overnight at G---. While having their game of cards that evening, some liquor was passed around. A discussion started on temperance legislation, most of them agreeing that it was all rot, and that a man should be free to drink whenever he desired. Paul was taking his glass with the others. A big fellow who turned out to be a French Roman Catholic stepped from the corner where he had been quietly sitting, and with his clear, fearless blue eyes looked squarely at the group who were so unfavorable to any temperance legislation.

" 'Men!' he said, 'I was a blacksmith in the town of B—, and, if I do say it myself, I was a good one. But the bar-room was handy and I was often invited to take a drink, which I did. The habit grew on me. Then I began to go home in a bad condition. My patient wife managed to keep the children from knowing what was wrong. I went from bad to worse. Often when I went home I just couldn't face my Maker.' Then looking around at man after man with those fearless blue eyes, he continued, 'and fellows, you know it is a very poor man that will not face his Maker once a day.'

"There was deep silence for two or three minutes: not a word was uttered. It was a better sermon than most preachers could have given. Then they say that your young friend Paul, with face that had turned pale, pushed away his glass, and looking at the man with the fearless blue eyes, said quietly, 'I'm a mighty poor man, but God helping me, I'm through with this.' He walked to the door, and the man who had spoken so courageously followed him. They evidently walked around for awhile. When the prospecting party assembled in the morning, Paul was missing. His bill had been settled the night before and he had apparently gone off earlier with the Frenchman. No one can furnish any further information at present, but I should fancy Paul is comparatively safe if he is with a man who in the spirit of the above incident is facing his Maker every day."

That is all the news that is available at the moment of writing, but in the goodness of the One Who is ever seeking the wanderer, the day is not far distant when Paul Mowat will turn again home.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## In Showery, Flowery England

I HAD made my way down the winding road of a Midland County village in dear old "showery, flowery England". The summer of 1933 will be gladly remembered, however, by tourists, as much more flowery than showery. The weather had smiled on sight-seers week after week. For those who desired the open air, with its sometimes joyous and sometimes "solemn stillness", the season was ideal. Day by day one could bend his footsteps "... to some green and tranquil dell where the trees grow leaves of healing and the birds sing unafraid".

By delightful meadow paths alongside of flowery hedges, down green lanes, through kissing gates and over stiles, I had walked from a nearby town. It seemed as if everything was giving praise. The light breezes were causing the trees of the field to "clap their hands", and the golden grain seemed to be waving the message that "seed-time and harvest shall not fail". And then

*"Out of the tuft a little lark went higher up than I could mark,  
His little throat was all one thirst  
To sing until his heart should burst.  
To sing aloft in golden light,  
His song from blue air out of sight."*

(FROM MASEFIELD'S "EVERLASTING MERCY")

Outside the brown stone school-house of boyhood days, the lads were enjoying their recess in a game of cricket. Their forefathers had sported on the same public green, with its circle of glorious elms and stalwart oaks. Baseball would have seemed incongruous in that

beautiful, sleepy village. Cricket is characteristically English. As John Hutton has said, "There is a quietness in cricket, a time-element, a leisureness, and withal the need for a steady yet not a strained attention, which makes the saying of an American friend wiser than he knew who described cricket as 'not a game but a religious service'."

The stolid earnestness about the postures of the little chaps seemed to suggest that any hilarity would be quite out of place. As in my boyhood days, the village still had its delightfully venerable cottages with thatched roofs, beneath which apricot trees spread forth in palm-like shape their fruit-laden branches across the entire front of the peasant homes. Along the telegraph wires were the twittering swallows and martins.

Except for the lofty Gothic spire, the church to which the visitor was making his way lay hidden among the trees. For at least eight centuries it had been the place "where a few villagers on bended knee found solace". The aged sexton was in the churchyard, with its forest of moss and lichen-covered tomb-stones that "recorded successive generations of sturdy yeomanry whose progeny still plough the same fields and kneel at the same altar". He was at his never-ending task of caring for the flowers and trimming the grass and shrubbery. Watching him at his work was a bent and aged villager. Leaning heavily upon the stick that he had once cut from the hedgerow, he was recalling happenings of sixty and seventy years ago. "Ah! it was me what 'elped to pull 'im down. Wot's the date, George? Hi can't see no more. 1875, eh? 'Ow long ago be that, George? Ah! 58 years, eh? Hi know hi was a-workin' for Squire Gardner, 'im with the squint eye, wen 'e died."

The stranger interrupted with a question. The back

that was bent with long years of infirmity was slowly and painfully raised a trifle. The poor old man at his best was a distressing-looking figure. "Hi be orful bad wi' the screws (rheumatism) since hi 'ad a haccident nigh thirty years ago, sir. Yu see 'ow hits crippled me, sir. Hi cahn't straighten hup no more. Hi wus just tellin' George 'ow hi 'elped to pull this 'ere man down.

"Eh? Ho well, yu see, sir, this kind o' grave 'as bricks hall round, 'an they leaves plenty o' room fur whoever wants to be buried hin the same grave. Yu see, sir, us used to go hin slopin'-like, so's not to 'ave to move the topstones, and somebody 'as to creep hinside and 'elp to pull 'em hin. Yes sir, hi 'elped pull 'im hin fifty-eight years ago, hi did."

There seemed to be a grim satisfaction in the knowledge that once he could creep into a grave and had helped to "pull in" a villager of prominence. The visitor wanted to see the belfry, which revived other memories of the old villager's early and less painful days. "Belfry, sir? 'Im (pointing to the sexton), 'im and me pulled the bell ropes fur forty year, didn't we, George? We pulled 'em wen the Prince of Wales, 'im wots now hour king, come 'ere."

The sexton secured a bunch of keys that looked as though they might have come from some prehistoric age of giants. Three doors had to be unlocked by monster keys before the visitor saw the narrow, winding and well-worn steps leading to the belfry. Did he wish to go up? He did, but not alone. The atmosphere and the darkness of the stairway, and the narrowness of the steps themselves, combined to give him a creepy feeling. The climb and the darkness seemed interminable, and he almost regretted he had made the request. At last the belfry was reached. Ten or twelve ropes, with

a noose for the foot, hung as they had hung for many a decade. The lower portions were shiny and dirty, where many a laborer's hands had laid hold to join his fellow-ringers in those delightful chimes that few can hear unmoved.

We stood gazing up through the rafters as the old sexton located the bells and explained the particular uses of a few of them. The visitor reminded him of the fact that the bell-ringers do not get the benefit of the music they produce. They are too near. Only distance can obliterate the clash and clang and confusion. "I remember when, once in a while, we boys were allowed to come up here, it was a great event, but the noise almost terrified me. But when we got down again and crossed the churchyard and went over the brook to the meadow yonder, we realized that every bell was ringing in its proper order. I wanted to climb to this old belfry once more, because it has brought a comforting message to me many a time."

"Ow do you mean, sir?"

"Well, you see, life sometimes seems to be like those belfry days. I cannot quite catch its music. There appears to be so much of clash and discord. But I know that one of these days I shall cross the river, and in the quietness of that other land I shall be able to understand and to catch the harmony, and know that all things were working together for good because I loved Him. The bell ringers have helped me. Maybe you were one of them in my boyhood days, and I want to thank you."

A coin was put into his hand. "Thank you, sir; that's very kind o' you, sir, but if you 'adn't 'ave done that, sir, hit would 'ave been halright." He hesitated a moment, and then in a voice a bit tremulous he continued, "Hi be glad you come, mister; wen hi climb the

belfry now hi shull remember wot you said. Hi never thought o' that afore."

Following a footpath along the brook, and then turning at the old mill, with its moss-covered wheel, I came to a secluded, honeysuckle and rose-covered house. The rural English folk seem to have discovered how to beautify their abodes as perhaps no other peoples have. There is almost a witchery about their use of Nature's beautiful trailing flowers and harmonious combinations that transform unostentatious dwellings into a veritable paradise.

A curious-looking chap, with a yoke across his back, was going with his two dangling pails to a nearby spring. I inquired if I was at the right house. I wished to find Obadiah Wilkins. "That's right, mister; hif you open that door you can't miss 'im; 'e can't go nowhere, 'ees that bad with 'is rusty jynts."

If Obadiah's "jynts" were rusty, nothing else was out of order. He was the most sunshiny individual I had met in many a day. His rosy round face was encircled by neatly-trimmed whiskers which met his bushy white hair on each side. How cordially he welcomed the visitor. "Ah! of course I knew your mother, and your father, too! Right welcome you are! Come on in."

An invalid wife sat on one side of the fire-place. Her body had wanted to die for some years, but her cheery spirit had delayed the event. She was unable to rise, but took an animated part in the conversation, and it was soon evident that she had not lost the radiance of the Christian religion. As we chatted, a table was pulled near her, and she spread the bread and butter for the indispensable afternoon tea. It may not always be pouring rain in England as is sometimes supposed, but it is certainly always pouring tea. I referred to the curious

little chap I had met at the outer gate. "He's a character," laughed Obadiah. "Bill Flint is his name. We wouldn't get along very well without Bill. He comes night and morning to do what I can't manage.

"There is a good story they are telling about Bill. One of our village unreliables, Jack Butler, met him just outside the public-house some days ago. It seems somebody had told Jack that Bill had accused him of lying, which was not at all an unusual occurrence, for Jack does not seem to know how to tell the truth. As he saw Bill coming along the road, he stepped in front of him, and in a threatening attitude started to remove his coat. He was real angry as he asked: 'Did you tell Tom 'Awkins as 'ow I wus a bloomin' liar?' Little Bill, who is about half Jack's size, looked up without any sign of fear, and to the amusement of the other chaps, replied, 'No! Hi thought 'e knewed.'

"Bill once visited our county town when there was an exhibition of pictures. One of his relatives took him to see it. One picture was of a sow and her litter of ten young pigs. It was a painting of real merit, but Bill embarrassed his friend by saying pretty loudly that he did not think much of it. A lady who was greatly pleased with it turned sharply on Bill, and said in a tone of contempt, 'My good man, you evidently do not understand Art.' 'No, ma'am, maybe I doan't,' replied Bill, 'but I know summat about nature. I've been a feedin' pigs all me days, but I never seed a sow and ten pigs at a trough o' swill but one o' 'em 'ad got 'is foot in it: that 'ere pictur be too orderly to be natural.' "

"Tell him about Bill's father's funny prayer, Obadiah," said Mrs. Wilkins. "You enjoy that, don't you, Fannie?" he replied. His face beamed with unusual kindness whenever he looked at the invalid on the other

side of the fireplace. "Well," he began, "Bill's father was a good man, but he had no schooling and could not read a word. They say that when he worked in Cornwall he was a member of a church whose minister has since become a famous London preacher and writer. He used to take part in the prayer meetings. One night they say he prayed that the Lord would 'loose their jynts' because they were 'getting too stiff' to do the Lord's bidding. He asked the Lord to 'pour ile' over them all, and ended by praying, 'O blessed Lord, please ile us; ile us wi' the Isle o' Patmos.' "

What a picture of domestic bliss they made, as they sat in their armchairs on either side of the old-fashioned fire-place, with its side ovens and hobs! From the rack over the fire hung a kettle with soot-blackened bottom and well-polished top. A shining copper warming-pan was hanging on one side, and a pair of leather bellows on the other. Brass candlesticks, and one or two quaint china ornaments were on the mantelshelf; above them a picture of two young men in khaki. I rose from my chair to look at the photograph, not knowing the family history. The little old lady quietly said, "They are both gone, and even if I do say it, they were as good a pair of boys as God ever gave a mother." Obadiah added, in a voice of exquisite love and tenderness, "And they had as good a mother as God ever gave a pair of boys."

In a tone that was more appreciative than rebuking, she said, with a reproving shake of the head, "Obadiah says too many things like that, and he knows that he shouldn't." With a sigh she continued, "The time has sometimes seemed long, but as I was telling Obadiah yesterday, every day brings us nearer to our dear lads, and it cannot be very long now. I was reading some of the hymns last night, and one line kept

running through my mind long after we went to bed,  
'And heaven, the heart's true home, will come at last.'

A week later I was able to keep my promise to stay overnight with them. I remarked on the joy of an undisturbed evening in a quiet home, and how fine it was when husband and wife could be happily occupied in each other's company. "I'm afraid there isn't much that would tempt Obadiah to run around now that he is so bothered with rheumatism," said Mrs. Wilkins, with a sympathetic smile, "but thank God we have always enjoyed our own home and each other's company, haven't we, Obadiah?" One look at Obadiah's face revealed ample answer to the quiet question.

Both were reminiscent, and in the late evening told of their sorrows and struggles, always ending with thanksgiving for what they enjoyed. In earlier days he had laboured on a village estate. Wages were small. For months at a time bread and cheese constituted his daily dinner. Often the bread alone had to suffice; in that case it would be soaked in water, with a sprinkling of salt and pepper, or eaten with half an onion to give it a flavor. Meat was too expensive to be procured more than once a week.

Eventually he secured enough education to enable him to obtain a better position. When his boys were just getting where they could add to the comforts of the home, the war called them across the Channel. A year later one of the terrible telegrams beginning "regret to inform" reached the little rose-covered house. Four months later their second boy was also buried beneath an alien sky.

Within two years the brave little soul who kept "the home-fires burning", as many other bereaved mothers had done, was disabled by a stroke. Fortunately they

had sufficient income to keep them from want. Like most other patriotic English folk, what little they had was placed at the disposal of their country. As time went on and the national debt became so appallingly heavy that obligations could not be met without the loan conversion, their small income became still smaller. Yet there was not a murmur. They had that co-operative spirit and ready self-sacrifice that is inseparable from the true John Bull type, and to which every honest observer must take off his hat.

As the time for retiring approached, Obadiah reached for a Book that was always near at hand. In a quietly impressive voice the old man said, "Mother and I say that we pillow our heads on the Promises. I think we rest better after we read the Old Book. If the day has been a bit trying or lonely"—he looked pathetically upward at the figures in khaki—"and we are tempted to worry, it quiets us down to hear His voice. Yes! I know it does. We were saying last night that for forty years we have repeated the twenty-third Psalm together before closing our eyes in sleep. Will you please read and pray with us?"

A few verses were read about the new Jerusalem and of the great day when death shall be swallowed up in victory. A strangely quiet peace seemed to enfold us, for there are souls like Obadiah and Fannie Wilkins who are reminders that there may be "colonies of heaven" in the midst of a world that is painfully restless and carelessly Godless. They knew much of the peace that passeth all understanding.

That night will ever remain a precious and awe-inspiring memory. As the Book was closed, the little mother, with eyes that seemed to be seeing invisible things, looked again at the picture above the mantel,

and quietly repeated a few words of the reading: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death. No more death! No more death!" she repeated, almost in a whisper, as if unmindful of the presence of others. Again there came over us "that deep hush, subduing all". We were about to bow in prayer when the frail hand was extended towards her husband: "Oh! Obadiah, look!" Both our hearts must have been tremulous as we gazed at her face. There was a look that held us in awe. I had once before seen that kind of look on another face, but even so, no sensitive man could mistake its significance. I think we were both afraid to move. At least there was a restraining influence that held us in anxious, almost painful, anticipation. "Look, Obadiah!" A smile, and again the eyes seemed to be beholding far-off things. Then it seemed as if her very soul was being fully and finally expressed through her eyes. Then another smile of radiant wonder. She was passing from us. We both knew that. Obadiah leaned forward as if to go to her aid, but he hesitated as she revealed the cause of that smile of radiant wonder. "Oh—h, my Arthur!" There was a pause. "Oh! my Fred!" Her strength was gone. The head fell back. The frail figure seemed to crumple in the chair, and Fannie Wilkins had gone where there shall be no more death, to the "heart's true home", towards which she had for so long been steadfastly looking.

It was far into the morning when Obadiah and his guest, with spirits that were still awed by the other-worldliness of the scene they had witnessed, yielded to the persuasion of kindly neighbours and lay down seeking a little rest. The dear soul who had gone ahead had taken unusual interest in having the guest-room pre-

pared to bring all possible comfort and cheer to the visitor from another land. A vase of flowers artistically arranged by the frail hand that had pointed towards the land of beauty, was on the table. Even though the home was humble there were certain feminine touches about the guest-room that expressed grace and charm. The best linen the home possessed had been brought forth. A dainty little volume of "Day by Day" verses she had asked to be placed near the head of the bed. The passage for that day began "while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen". No guest-room had ever seemed so sacred. A few hours after its attractive preparation the hostess was with her Lord, Who had said, "I go to prepare a place for you."

In the morning I referred to the passage in "Day by Day", and to Mrs. Wilkins' loving thought for my comfort. I also mentioned the lovely ramblers around the window. "Yes," said Obadiah, "after everything was fixed, she said brightly, 'And please pull some of my Dorothy Perkins blossoms as near as they will come to his room, so that they will be peeking in at him when he wakens in the morning.'"

THE END.



**DATE DUE SLIP**

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